

Sight & Sound

THE INTERNATIONAL FILM MAGAZINE



January I I

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SOFIA COPPOLA

ON THE PERILS OF FAME
IN HER FILM 'SOMEWHERE'

Plus

'Of Gods and Men':
The monk movie that's
taken France by storm

David Thomson asks
Why 'Citizen Kane'?

Ernst Lubitsch and
'The Shop Around the Corner'

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REVIEWED

THE BEST FILMS OF 2010

OUR WRITERS CHOOSE THEIR
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

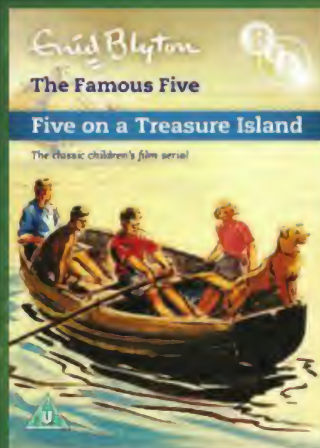


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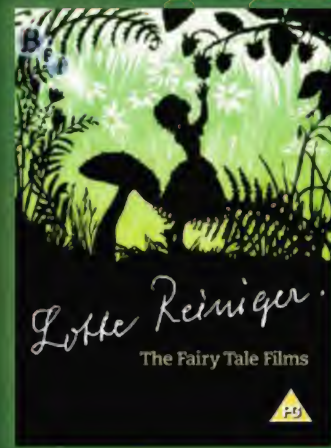
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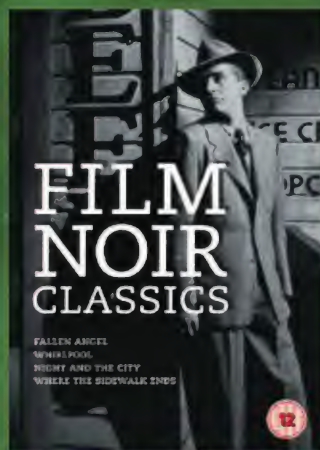
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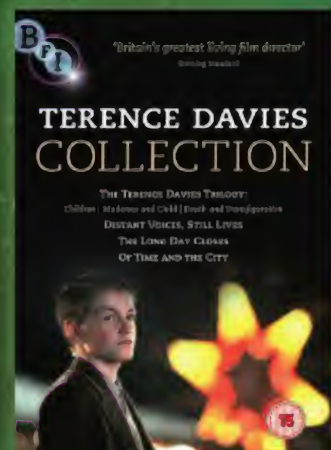
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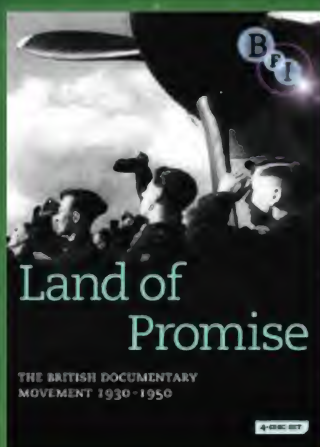
Five of Tati's most cherished films packaged together with a host of extra features



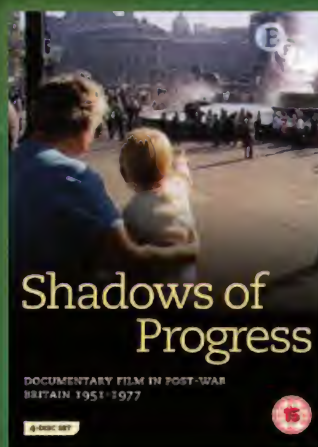
Regarded by many as Jacques Tati's masterpiece
Remastered version



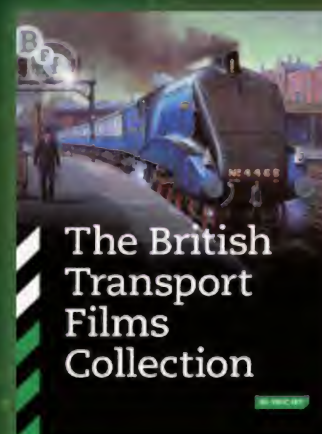
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Sofia Coppola © Corbis

Next issue
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4 January

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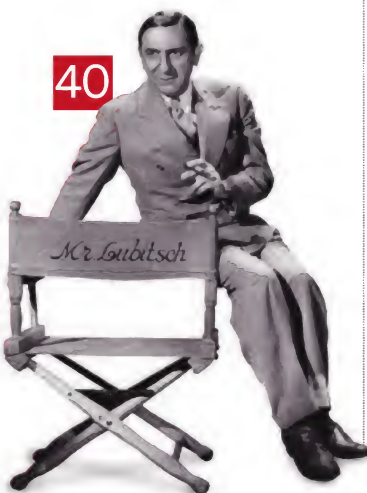
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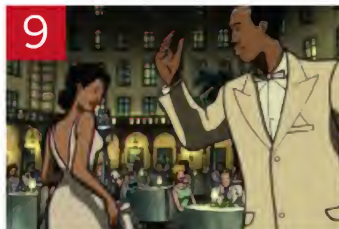
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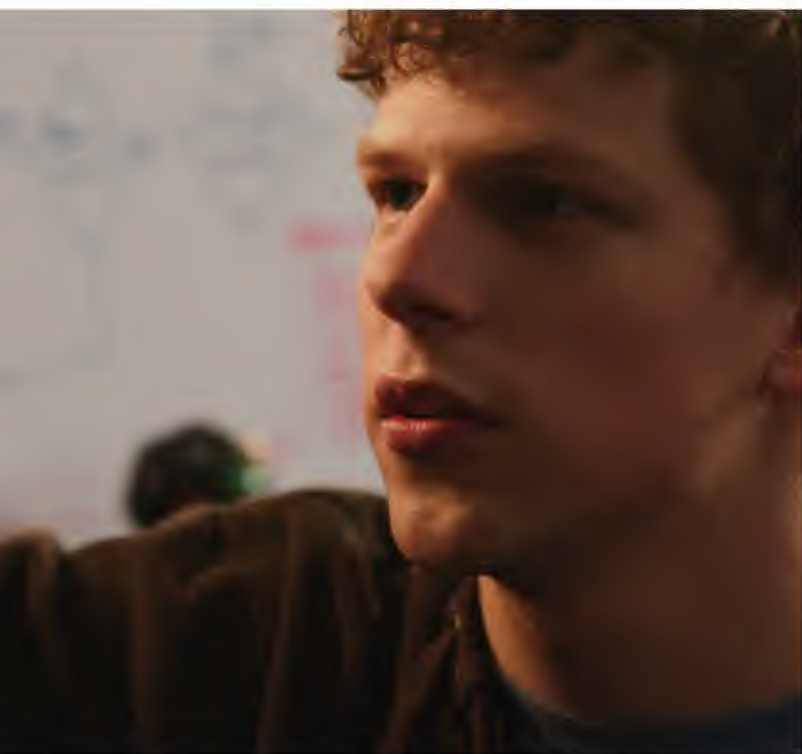
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Welcome. What is it about flawed young genius entrepreneurs who transform the way we experience the world, only to find themselves alone and reviled? As played by Jesse Eisenberg (left), Facebook's embattled Mark Zuckerberg is a Charles Foster Kane for our times – and may yet also prove an Orson Welles (far left), if his greatest achievement turns out to be by the age of 25. And just as in the past *Citizen Kane* has triumphed in our once-a-decade 'Greatest Film of All Time' poll (for which David Thomson starts campaigning on p. 44), so now the new film about Zuckerberg, *The Social Network*, has conquered all in our review of 2010 (p.24). Balancing the old and the new, we move from that other much-loved 1940s classic *The Shop Around the Corner* (p.40) and the trail-blazing experiments of Len Lye (p.38) to the LA cool of cover star Sofia Coppola (p.16) and *Of Gods and Men*'s monastic calm. (p.50) **Nick James**

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best of 2010



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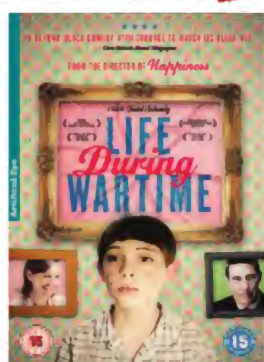
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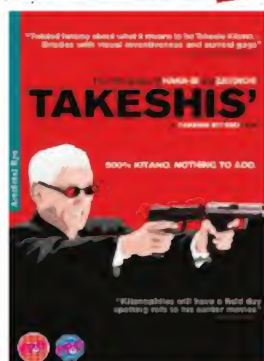
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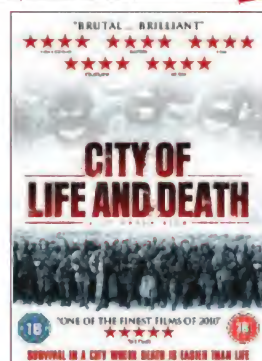
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NICK JAMES

GAME ON



In our letters page this month we receive an upbraiding from one of our contributors, the *New Statesman* critic Ryan Gilbey, for not editing out a phrase in a review by another contributor, Henry K.

Miller, in which he wrote: "*The Social Network* is a classic." Gilbey argues that "classic" is "an unhelpful, meaningless term... It isn't so very far from '*The Social Network* is a classic' to 'five stars'." His contention is undeniably correct: in the context of a review, we should have curbed Miller's albeit understandable enthusiasm because, if the word has any meaning, it requires time to pass before it can be bestowed. However, it so happens that *The Social Network* is the clear winner of our annual Best Film poll for 2010, so history may, in the end, prove Miller right.

Coincidentally, Henry K. Miller has used our poll's request for highlights of the year (see p.32) to quote the recently deceased literary critic Frank Kermode on the very subject of canon-forming. "If we want the monuments, the documents we value, we must preserve them in spite of their evil associations," Kermode wrote. As regular readers know, canon-forming is the activity for which this magazine is most renowned – specifically the twin polls we conduct every ten years, one asking the world's critics to list the greatest films of all time, the other asking the world's directors to do the same. We're next due to conduct these polls in 2012, and in this edition David Thomson (see p.44) starts a new series of debates rolling by questioning the efficacy of the polls.

Citizen Kane has won this S&S poll every time it's been conducted (1962, 1972, 1982, 1992, 2002) except the first (1952), when the film hadn't been seen that widely because of the war. *Kane* is undoubtedly a monument, and the problems associated with creating monuments to 'dead white males' remain a live issue. For Thomson, *Kane* has the added monumental dimension of seeming to be immovable. Amidst his forehand encouragements to vote, our poll activity comes in for one or two backhand slaps:

"The game is not just vulgar, it's stupid," he says. "Yet we all love games."

The idea of canon-forming as a game, however, brings me back to the subject-matter of *The Social Network*, and to the use of canons on the website that the film's protagonist Mark Zuckerberg founded. Canons of music and film are intrinsic to the online social identities people create. For instance, it so happens that Ryan Gilbey recently sent me a Facebook request to play a simple game called 'mp3 shuffle'. You distribute a list of the first 25 songs selected by your player's shuffle mode to 25 friends. Of course, this game gives – as most Facebook games do – a kind of instant snapshot of your 'identity'. That's 'snapshot' as in 'reductionist first impression'. Yes, the list is drawn from the music you chose to download, but the actual decisions are made by an algorithm. It throws up exactly the kind of spiky, lucky dip lists

Canons of music and film are intrinsic to the online social identities people create... giving a kind of instant snapshot of your 'identity'

that anti-canonicals tend to prefer. But do these really tell you anything?

In her insightful combined review of *The Social Network* and Jaron Lanier's book *You Are Not a Gadget: A Manifesto* in the *New York Review of Books*, Zadie Smith disassembles not only the film but also the Facebook site itself. She draws a lengthy set of conclusions, of which I have space only to reproduce the most obvious: "When a human being becomes a set of data on a website like Facebook," she writes, "he or she is reduced. Everything shrinks. Individual character. Friendships. Language. Sensibility."

If Smith is right about the canon-based exchanges of Facebook, can the same be said about our canon games? I would suggest that the aggregate of careful, individual decisions made by the many enthusiasts in our polls offers something else – something more complex, organic and human. The true usefulness of the word 'classic', however, is something we'll return to another time.



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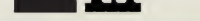
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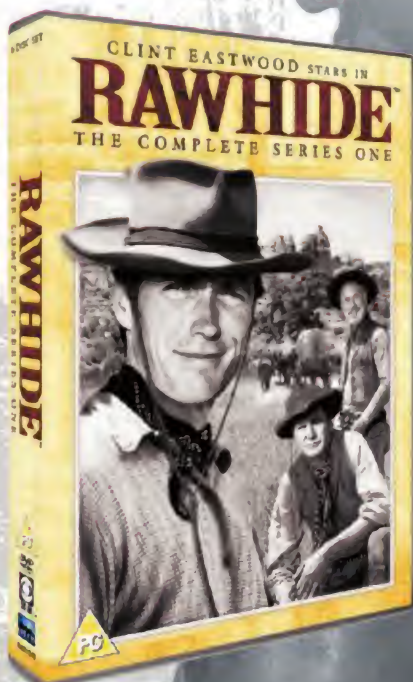
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THE BIGGER PICTURE



You
talkin'
to me?

"We were all young enough to want to do something that will last. De Niro told me that he thought it would be a film people would be watching 50 years from now... That's how we came to it, and that's why we didn't make any compromises."

So said Paul Schrader in an interview in 1976, talking about the then recently released 'Taxi Driver', made from his script. The interview is one of several archive pieces – among them a 'Playboy' magazine interview with a very wary

Robert De Niro from 1989, and a profile of the young Jodie Foster from 'The New York Times' in 1976 – collected in a new book on Martin Scorsese's hellish vision of mid-1970s New York.

But the real lure here is the lavish full-page reproductions of on-set photographs taken by Steve Schapiro, including Scorsese (above) and De Niro as Travis Bickle (right).

'Taxi Driver: Photographs by Steve Schapiro' is available now for a purse-busting £450 from Taschen.



They call him Mr Kim

Tony Rayns pays tribute to Kim Dong-ho, who put Pusan on the festival map

The 73-year-old Kim Dong-ho retired as director of Pusan International Film Festival this year, and much of the event was devoted to saying goodbye to him. There were two big farewell parties, two books were published (one collecting his essays on film festivals, the other his photos of Korean film luminaries) and continuous tributes were paid. At the raucous indie filmmakers' party he was carried around the room on someone's back before frugging to Abba with Juliette Binoche. Britain is one of the few countries Mr Kim hasn't yet conquered (PIFF's dates have clashed with the London Film Festival's for some years), and so the resonance of his departure will be lost on most readers of *S&S*. But it bears explaining, since Mr Kim has played an incalculable part in the growth of his festival and the rising international profile of Korean cinema.

Nobody expected much from PIFF when it was launched in September 1996. The inaugural festival was not too ambitious, confined to the working-class Nampo-dong district, close to the city's fish market (foreign guests were bussed in from luxury hotels in faraway Haeundae), with the films screened in a row of dingy fleapits clustered in one narrow street. But it was an instant, runaway success, largely because students flocked from all over the country and packed every screening, and Kim Dong-ho made it memorable for the filmmakers and other guests by hosting impromptu sidewalk parties every night. Much *soju* was drunk.

PIFF has never looked back; every subsequent year has seen an expansion of the programme, an upgrading of the facilities and a steady increase in the event's importance to regional and international film industries. A new permanent home for PIFF is under construction, scheduled to open in time for the 2011 festival.

It's no exaggeration to say that none of this would have happened without Kim Dong-ho. The festival was the brainchild of Kim Ji-seok, then a film-studies teacher at a college in Busan (as Pusan is now officially known), who teamed up with colleagues from the editorial board of the film-theory magazine *Film Language* and a few other friends and classmates to try to make it happen. But nothing moved until



Kim Dong-ho was soon recognised everywhere as the living embodiment of the spirit of Korean cinema

they invited Kim Dong-ho to become the festival's director and figurehead.

I first met Kim Dong-ho some 20 years ago, when he was head of the government's film office, the Korean Motion Picture Promotion Corporation. (Later, under non-military governments, it evolved into KOFIC, the Korean Film Council.) He was very different from other civil servants who held that post; he privately made it his business to study film, and often hosted dinners for students from the Korean Academy of Film Arts. Since this was several years before the shift to democratically elected civilian governments, such evenings invariably ended with the drunken singing of anti-government songs; I never saw Kim Dong-ho join in, but he never objected either. Mr Kim went on to become chief film censor (he was 'let go' after one liberal decision too many) and chairman of an educational cable channel before the boys from Busan came calling.

As PIFF's director, his unrivalled political and business connections brought in the grants and sponsorship needed to grease the festival's wheels. (It helped that the founder of Daewoo was his classmate in primary school.) And the late-night binges of his informal 'Tiger Club' – members include Thierry Frémaux, Simon Field and the directors Hou Hsiao-Hsien and Nonzee Nimibutr – became the stuff of legend, as did his ability to bounce back into action

each morning after. He began his non-stop programme of travelling to other festivals around the world, sometimes to sit on juries, and was soon recognised everywhere as a living embodiment of the spirit of Korean cinema – the modern equivalent of the late Madame Kawakita Kashiko, who represented Japanese cinema so effectively throughout its glory years. Back home he oversaw the launching of expansionist initiatives (a project market; the Asian Cinema Fund; the Asian Film Academy) designed to consolidate PIFF's growing status – and to give it first claim on films it helped get made. Meanwhile the city of Busan reinvented its infrastructure to meet the festival's needs (a new subway line was built, a new bridge spanned Gwangsan Bay) and became vastly more cosmopolitan and sophisticated in short order.

PIFF is unlikely to turn into a festival where the world's A-list directors want to launch their films (the titles it premieres are mostly Asian genre and indie movies), but Mr Kim has made it the capital of networking for East Asian cinema. In 2009 Lee Myung-bak's paranoid right-wing government targeted cultural institutions it imagined to be hotbeds of dangerous lefties, but PIFF emerged unscathed. Kim Dong-ho's legacy is a festival strong enough to withstand economic downturns and political attacks. He deserves the happiest of retirements.

● **Laurent Cantet**, the French director of *'The Class'*, *'Time Out'*, *'Going South'* and *'Human Resources'*, is to adapt Joyce Carol Oates's 1993 novel *'Foxfire: Confessions of a Girl Gang'*.

● **Sono Sion**, the Japanese director of such bizarre films as *'Suicide Club'*, the four-hour long *'Love Exposure'* and this year's *'Cold Fish'*, looks set to attract more controversy with *'Guilty of Romance'*, a sexually explicit story that begins with the discovery of a woman's body that has been cut in half and attached to a mannequin.

● **Wes Anderson** has cast Bruce Willis, Edward Norton, Tilda Swinton, Frances McDormand and his regular collaborator Bill Murray for his next feature, *'Moon Rise Kingdom'*. It takes place in a New England town in the late 1960s and follows events after two young lovers run away. The script has been co-written by Anderson and Roman Coppola.

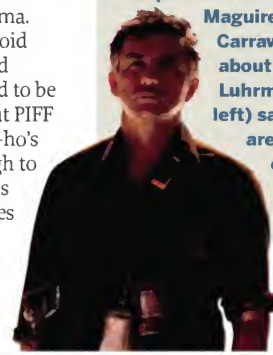
● **Stephen Frears** is to adapt Beth Raymer's gambling memoir *'Lay the Favourite'*, about a woman who gets involved with a group of older maths whizzes who rig the sports books in Las Vegas. Rebecca Hall and Bruce Willis are reportedly starring.

● **James Marsh**, the British director of *'Man on Wire'* and the '1980' segment of the *'Red Riding Trilogy'*, has cast Rebecca Hall and Guy Pearce in his upcoming adaptation of Tom Brabdy's novel *'Shadow Dancer'*. Hall will play a one-time IRA agent turned MI5 informer.

● **Bruce LaBruce**, the Canadian director of such underground hits as *'Hustler White'* and this year's *'L.A. Zombie'*, is the subject of a documentary, *'The Advocate for Fagdom'*, by Angelique Bosio. It includes interviews with John Waters, Gus Van Sant, Harmony Korine, Richard Kern and others, and is being tipped for inclusion in February's Berlinale.

● **Baz Luhrmann's** long-rumoured adaptation of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *'The Great Gatsby'* looks more certain after it was announced that Carey Mulligan has been cast as socialite Daisy Buchanan. Mulligan would join Leonardo DiCaprio as Gatsby and Tobey

Maguire as Nick Carraway. Asked about the project, Luhrmann (pictured left) said there are still "a few elements that I feel need to be resolved".



All you can eat

Kieron Corless wishes that he could have seen all the films on the menu at the Viennale

There are two sure signs of a smartly programmed film festival – panic and regret: panic on arrival, when you ransack the catalogue and realise how little of its glittering selection you'll see in the few days you're there; regret on departure, for the rarities you missed and may never see again, at least on a big screen. The Viennale scores stratospherically high on both axes – indicative, of course, of many rapturous moments in-between.

Never a festival to neglect the medium's history, two of the retrospectives and tributes at this year's Viennale kept drawing me obsessively, part of their kick being the opportunity to flit between vastly different sensibilities, one high European, the other abrasively lowbrow American. For the first, French cinematographer William Lubtchansky's recent death was marked by 12 screenings of phenomenal range in tone and texture, including Rivette's *Merry-Go-Round* (1981), Straub-Huillet's *Class Relations* (1984), and Josseliani's *La Chasse aux papillons* (1992).

The films of pulp poet Larry Cohen, lovingly assembled and curated by Olaf Möller, were an ecstatic counterpoint, thanks in



Silent night: 'Contactos' brings to life the claustrophobia of the Franco regime

part to the great man's introductions: off-the-cuff torrents of witty, self-deprecating anecdote that didn't even cease when the lights went down. As the sponsors' logos flashed up, that now-familiar Brooklyn drawl came from the back: "I didn't direct this bit." Cohen's films felt hard-wired into the American unconscious, the stand-outs for me being *It's Alive* (1974), about a monster baby, and especially his first directorial feature *Bone* (1972), a scalding black comedy about a black interloper into a rich, white couple's Beverly Hills home. It showed a maverick talent stretching its wings in an era congenial to such

adventurousness. The script was often laugh-out-loud funny and the performances pitch-perfect, giving full rein to surges of unpredictable emotion.

Another highlight was Paulino Viota's *Contactos* (1970), a legendary but until recently virtually impossible-to-see Spanish film made clandestinely at the fag end of the Franco era and once described by Noel Burch (at the festival with his new film *The Forgotten Space*, co-directed with Allan Sekula) as "one of the most important films of 70s", a judgement I'd endorse unreservedly. The film is shot predominantly in

claustrophobic interiors where three militants hatch political plots that remain shrouded in murk for the viewer; Viota has spoken of his attempt to capture the oppressive silences of the Franco regime by way of the formal strategies of Viennale favourites Straub-Huillet. That should give a sense of its mesmerising remoteness and strangeness – at times, *Contactos* seemed like a mysterious, fascinating object fetched up from another planet.

The ongoing dynamism of German cinema was represented by striking new works from the likes of Klaus Wyborny, Rudolf Thome and Maria Speth, but my favourite was Thomas Arslan's first genre foray, *Im Schatten* (*In the Shadows*), made from his own script. It's as taut and hard-nosed a crime thriller as you'll see, clearly under the influence of Melville's *Le Cercle rouge* in its close attention to the mechanics of crime. Tellingly, all the action seems to happen in the anonymous non-places of late capital.

There are no innocents in its postlapsarian, money-driven world, although you can't help but feel a twinge of sympathy for its ex-con protagonist Trojan (brilliantly incarnated by Mislav Maticevic) in a perfectly weighted final scene in which he battles to avoid a swift return to prison. Hopefully someone will pick *Im Schatten* up for UK distribution.

THE NUMBERS

Drawing audiences

Charles Gant finds animation 'Chico & Rita' going for adult cultural-niche audiences

Ten years ago, animated features targeting adult audiences were few and far between. This autumn alone, however, we've had four of them: *The Illusionist*, *A Town Called Panic*, *Mary and Max* and now *Chico & Rita*, a Cuban musical love story coming from Spanish Oscar-winner Fernando Trueba and acclaimed designer-illustrator-artist Javier Mariscal.

Maybe it's the Pixar effect: having made big-screen cartoons a destination of choice for audiences of all ages – and with the boundaries increasingly blurring between animation and live action – it's not so surprising that arthouse titles

such as *Persepolis* and *Waltz with Bashir* have come along targeting discerning adult viewers.

When it came to distributing *Chico & Rita*, the UK's CinemaNX had plenty of successful game plans to study; it plumped for the exact same late-November release date as *Waltz with Bashir*. However, the company's distribution boss Gemma Spector is cautious about overemphasising comparisons. "I think the audience does differ because *Chico & Rita* is not heavily politically themed," she says. "It's bright and vibrant and a very loving, sensuous film, and amazingly musical. It obviously straddles the Cuban revolution, but I don't think the focus is heavy on political history."

While aiming generally at upscale viewers, CinemaNX is marketing the film to a number of discrete niches.

"There's definitely a following for Mariscal," says Spector. "A lot of people wanted to see his first film. Then we've looked at various target audiences: art, animation, design, architecture, Spanish and Latin American, and music. We've done a lot of work with those communities." Unusually, CinemaNX booked ads in *Time Out* magazine in not just the Film section, but also Art and Music, and this multi-pronged approach has been reflected in the festival strategy. Rather than risk getting lost in a large UK film festival, the ambition has been to make a big noise at events such as the London Design Festival, Cine Cuba, Bradford Animation Festival, onedotzero and the London Latin American Film Festival.

While UK audiences are resistant to dubbing, animation can be an exception to the rule. *Persepolis*, for

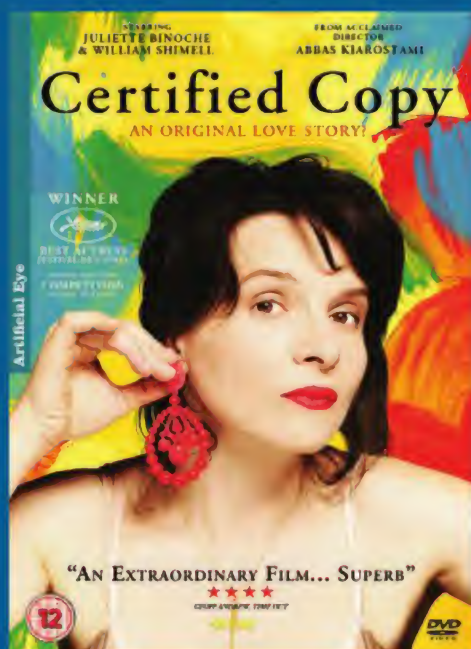
Arthouse animation at UK box office

Film	Year	Gross
<i>Spirited Away</i>	2003	£1,010,818
<i>A Scanner Darkly</i>	2006	£995,867
<i>Persepolis</i>	2006	£902,651
<i>The Illusionist</i>	2010	£892,352*
<i>Howl's Moving Castle</i>	2005	£851,570
<i>Ponyo</i>	2010	£771,843
<i>Belleville Rendez-vous</i>	2003	£740,726
<i>Waltz with Bashir</i>	2008	£704,249

*still on release

example, showed here in both dubbed and original-language versions. *Chico & Rita* opted not to go down that route. "It's tricky, since all the songs are in Spanish," says Spector. "And when I spoke to exhibitors about it, the feeling was that they would possibly do it as an option in a few sites, but generally they felt that the audience always wanted to see it in its original language."

New Release Titles on DVD



Abbas Kiarostami Certified Copy

From acclaimed director Abbas Kiarostami comes the story of a couple's apparent chance meeting in beautiful Tuscany. Starring Juliette Binoche in an outstanding performance that won her this year's Best Actress award at the Cannes Film Festival, this romantic tale playfully and provocatively blurs the lines between reality and imagination. **'An extraordinary film... Superb'** Geoff Andrew, *Time Out*

- Available on Blu-Ray and DVD from 17th January 2011



Debra Granik Winter's Bone

Jennifer Lawrence gives the performance of her life in one of the most critically acclaimed thrillers of the year. Winner of the Best Film and Screenwriting awards at this year's Sundance Film Festival, director Debra Granik has created one of the most visually arresting and unforgettable films of the year. **'An intense and gripping thriller... the best American film since The Hurt Locker'** Allan Jones, *Uncut Magazine*

- Available on Blu-Ray and DVD from 31st January 2011



Claire Denis White Material

Isabelle Huppert gives an extraordinary performance in one of the most critically acclaimed films of the year. Claire Denis' riveting and powerful thriller examines the highly charged and controversial legacy of colonialism. **'There's no better film-maker working in the world right now'** Nick James, *Sight and Sound*

- Available on Blu-Ray and DVD from 6 December 2010

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Odd one out

With his controversial and racially charged final film 'The Liberation of L.B. Jones', William Wyler confounded critics and audiences alike, says **Neil Sinyard**

The title of William Wyler's final film, *The Liberation of L.B. Jones*, is as ironic as that of his most famous work, *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946): L.B. Jones's only liberation will be in death.

Many critics were taken aback by this extraordinary film when it was released in 1970. "Surprising", "ferocious" and even "sickening" were among the adjectives most frequently employed. *Variety* dismissed it as "an inter-racial sexploitation film", whereas Andrew Sarris thought it remarkable. Coming so soon after successful liberal films that close on a note of racial harmony, such as *In the Heat of the Night* (1967) and *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1967), the film's pessimism must have seemed totally unexpected.

Even more surprising was the fact that this unremittingly grim film was made by Hollywood veteran William Wyler, the most honoured of all American directors, but one whose critical reputation had fallen dramatically during the heyday of auteurism. His films were dismissed as cold and impersonal, but *L.B. Jones* is hot and impassioned. The late, great Robin Wood uncharitably dismissed Wyler's work as "archetypally bourgeois", but there's nothing bourgeois about this film's rage against white supremacists.

L.B. Jones (Roscoe Lee Browne) is a wealthy black undertaker in a small Tennessee town seeking divorce from his young wife, who is having an affair with a white policeman (Anthony Zerbe). When Brown's wife contests the divorce, the white lawyer (Lee J. Cobb) representing him begins to get cold feet because it means the name of her lover will come out in court, jeopardising race relations and the policeman's career. The events that follow uncover a procession of sexual and legal hypocrisies and outrages by which blacks are oppressed by whites in that community. Everything builds to a violent climax involving two murders and mutilations. In both cases, the guilty perpetrator escapes unpunished.

One would expect a Wyler film to be well acted; he had, after all, guided more actors to Oscar-winning performances than any other director. Roscoe Lee Browne, Lee J. Cobb and



Vendetta: L.B. Jones (Roscoe Lee Browne, right) is silenced by racist cops

Anthony Zerbe are the pick of a fine cast, Zerbe in particular excelling as the wretched cop who has a modicum of conscience writhing uncomfortably beneath his surface bigotry. A scene between Zerbe and Brown across a breakfast table, in which the cop tries to pressure the undertaker into dropping the divorce, is an especially fine example of Wyler's *mise en scène*. Brown's stillness reflects the character's obstinacy, while Zerbe's nervous pacing and his inability to command the cinematic space eloquently suggest the policeman's innate weakness.

The most powerful sequence is the ten-minute chase of Jones across a junkyard by two policemen intent on silencing him before he gets to court. I can think of few more desolate and disturbing images in all cinema than the sequence's final overhead shot of Jones's murdered body hanging by a hook next to that of a dead dog, which is being called forlornly in the

It's the fiercest indictment of racial prejudice ever to come out of a major Hollywood studio

distance by its blind owner, as the two policemen silently survey the result of their night's work.

In some ways, the film's most original aspect is its structure. Wyler sets up genre expectations of the liberal Hollywood movie that he then ruthlessly dismantles. Far from revealing a warm humanity under the gruff exterior, Lee J. Cobb's lawyer becomes more deeply compromised and contemptible in his selective morality. Lee Majors's young lawyer, seemingly a character likely to rectify wrongs, walks out of the situation with righteous but impotent anger.

L.B. Jones refuses to run and his courage leads directly to his brutal murder. A black youth (Yaphet Kotto) who renounces violence midway through the film returns at the end to exact a vengeance more sadistic than the one originally planned.

In his last interview before his death, Wyler told his daughter Catherine that he had aimed the film at a white audience who he hoped would be embarrassed and enraged by what he depicted. Perhaps he succeeded too well. In the immortal phrase of Wyler's former employer Sam Goldwyn, the public stayed away in droves. Its picture of a conflicted America might have struck too many raw nerves in a country still reeling over the assassinations of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, a divisive war in Vietnam – and the departure from the White House of another LBJ.

The film seemed then to fall off the critical map, being displaced by black American filmmakers with their own visions of the black experience. To the best of my recollection, it has not been shown on terrestrial television here for over 20 years and has yet to be given a proper DVD release.

As a huge fan of Wyler's work, I saw the film on its UK release playing as second feature to Irvin Kershner's adult comedy *Loving* (another fine, forgotten film that warrants rediscovery). I was with a friend who was so distressed by it that she never stayed for the main feature and never accompanied me to the cinema again. For me its power remains undiminished. In the era of Obama's America, it surely deserves reclamation as the fiercest indictment of racial prejudice ever to come out of a major Hollywood studio. For cineastes too it might give a fresh perspective on Wyler who, right to the end of his career, was trying out new things and vigorously denouncing injustice. But be prepared to be shocked: it makes *To Kill a Mockingbird* look like *Mary Poppins*.

What the papers said



nervy petulance of a true sadist. Their vendetta... is brought to the

"Roscoe Lee Browne's L. B. suggests reserves of bitterness behind a stoic mask, while Anthony Zerbe as Willie Joe has the whining, nery petulance of a true sadist. Their vendetta... is brought to the

boil with a tremendous gathering tension, achieved by Wyler's perfect timing of individual scenes and his sense of the right camera set-up. With its genuinely ferocious climax 'L.B. Jones' adds up to probably the most powerful, if not the most sophisticated, race-war film the commercial studios have yet produced."

Nigel Andrews, 'Monthly Film Bulletin', December 1970

"William Wyler's cinematic reputation notwithstanding, the story... is not much more than an inter-racial sexploitation film. There is a pervading commercial patness to the fleshed-out script and the overall production. However true-to-life the characters and situations are, many another film already has made the ground covered almost stereotyped."

'Variety', 11 March 1970

The way we're living

Marc Isaacs observes people at home and in transit for his intimate portraits of our times, says **Edward Lawrenson**

For his latest project, documentary maker Marc Isaacs has spent the past few weeks outside a North London magistrates' court gathering footage of individuals caught up in the justice system. As it happens, the court is ten minutes from where I live, and when I meet Isaacs, I recognise him as the scruffy figure with a camcorder I've seen hanging about on the unlovely stretch of pavement outside it.

"It's very raw," Isaacs says of the material so far. "We're talking to people about things the judge will never know – so many complicated life stories open out." It sounds like a fascinating project, and it's typical of Isaacs's attentive brand of filmmaking that he's able to find such a rich source of stories in a place that a local like me passes every day without a second glance.

Isaacs's alert sense of discovery in otherwise mundane locations is evident in his breakthrough film, *Lift* (2007). Set almost entirely in the elevator of an East London tower block, it charts Isaacs's interaction with its residents. Made with a deft feel for atmosphere, *Lift* offers funny, poignant and humane glimpses of characters in transit, whose stories build – as much through what goes left unsaid as what is explicitly stated – into a study of urban neighbourliness and solitude. The setting is cramped and restrictive, but the attitude generous and expansive.

The geographical focus of Isaacs's work has since broadened to rail in *Travellers* (2002) and a French port in *Calais: The Last Border* (2003). He chronicles these diverse places with a rough-hewn vividness and handheld lyricism, but his foremost fascination is with people. Tending

to work alone with a single camera, Isaacs is intimate without being intrusive, empathic without being condescending, and wryly alert to characters' foibles and peculiarities without ever mocking them. *Storyville* editor Nick Fraser sees this as an antidote to the freak-show tendency of much factual television, as Isaacs "doesn't piss on the people he films."

Fraser's comment features in an interview on a new DVD of Isaacs's most recent films, *All White in Barking* (2007) and *Men of the City* (2009). The former is, on one level, an investigation of immigration's impact on the East London borough, but it is less an issue-based work than an ensemble character piece. We meet Dave, an ageing BNP supporter and grandfather to a mixed-race child; Susan, a middle-aged white woman of blustery good humour who is deeply unsettled by a Nigerian family moving in across the street; and Monty, an elderly Holocaust survivor from Poland who is infatuated with the young Nigerian woman who cares for him. "As you find characters, the whole thing comes alive," Isaacs says. "I like to explore themes within their situations. I'm not very drawn to obviously defined stories with a single narrative line. I much prefer to react to things that I'm interested in and make them cohere later on."

Deceptively freewheeling, *All White in Barking* in fact reveals Isaacs's and his editor David Charap's canny sense of structure. Food, in particular, emerges as a unifying motif: the closure of a long-established butcher's shop opposite a Halal butcher distils the tension between white tradition and more recent 'ethnic' culture. Susan expresses this when she objects to the 'exotic' meals that her Nigerian neighbour Dickson and his family are likely to prepare. This prompts Isaacs to invite her to a dinner party hosted by Dickson – it makes for deliciously uncomfortable comedy as Susan and her husband struggle endearingly



'All White in Barking', about immigration in East London, is less an issue-based work than an ensemble character piece

through a dish of "cow foot". While observational, Isaacs is also cheerfully interventionist, gently probing, sometimes provoking his subjects to explore themes he's interested in. The dinner party is staged for the film, but in filming the moment he asks Susan to participate, Isaacs is transparent.

"I would never have cut to Susan knocking on Dickson's door, taking the viewer into the dinner party scene out of the blue," Isaacs explains. "First, you'd never believe it. Second, I came to that idea through a thought process [reached] during the filming. I liked Susan, and it was interesting how she spoke about Africans –

so strange it was funny. But I had a problem: how do you develop her as a character? Then I came up with the idea of her meeting her neighbours. She didn't know I was going to do that, so you could say it's quite a cheap trick [to film it] because you're bound to get a reaction. But the point for me is to go further than that."

In Susan's case, going further means discovering she has a connection to Barking that goes deeper than any ill-formed prejudice – a final-reel revelation helps humanise her and points up Isaacs's capacious curiosity and alert sensitivity towards all his subjects.

His films' intimate, almost confessional tone is partly dictated by technology. Isaacs often records audio with his on-camera microphone, which demands a physical closeness to his contributors. But the deeper issue is one of trust, and of using the camera to allow or encourage his characters to express themselves in less guarded moments. One especially fine example comes towards the end of *Men of the City*. A study of male workers in the City of London – from a philosophical street cleaner to an overworked hedge-fund manager – the film is, among other things, a portrait of the sacrifices and possible



Street life: 'Men of the City', above; 'All White in Barking', top



Close quarters: Isaacs's breakthrough documentary 'Lift'



regrets that accompany many high-level positions in finance.

After a long career at a top bank, middle-aged Norman takes early retirement for a job overseas. Isaacs joins Norman in his garden in the suburbs as he enjoys a late-night smoke. Having already spoken about the pressure his father put on him to work in the City, Norman answers Isaacs's questions about why he never had children with a terse matter-of-factness that is nonetheless freighted with ineffable discomfort.

"It's quite fascinating when you feel you should approach somebody," Isaacs says of this final, moving encounter with Norman. "You're looking at someone and deciding on their mood, sensing whether they're in a kind of 'filmic space'. Something happens when you film someone, a level of performance – I mean that in a very light way. When Norman is talking about why he never had children... I've set up that situation. I followed him home after work, sat down and had food with him. I knew I wanted to talk to him about this and was thinking about the best situation in which to do it, so I said: 'Can we go in the garden? I want to shoot a scene there.' I may even say: 'Just get yourself into a relaxed state of mind.' I've created an atmosphere where Norman is almost waiting for a question and [feels] slightly pensive. I've also said before: 'If you don't feel like answering then don't.' Most of the time you have to prime people."

It's a technique, I suggest, that owes as much to therapy as conventional journalism. "Probably," Isaacs laughs, looking unconvinced, before adding: "It shouldn't feel like an interview. If someone's caught up in their own headspace, I enter into that; there's an atmosphere that's going on that you just sort of step into."

While *Men of the City* extends Isaacs's familiar acute insights into the interior lives of his characters, it is also his most visually expressionistic and overtly stylised piece. A sense of foreboding, of imminent demise, underlies the image of London: Isaacs tends to show the city drenched in a torrential nocturnal downpour, sequences that carry intimations of an apocalyptic flood (underscored by the opening sequence capturing two men at a bus stop talking about the end of the world).

This end-of-days atmosphere proved portentous. During filming, the 2008 crash occurred, lending a keening relevancy to *Men of the City*'s sceptical view of the benefits of high finance. To an extent, the same is true of *All White* since, two years after filming there, Barking hosted a well-publicised challenge by the BNP to the sitting Labour MP. "We like to work with filmmakers who belong to their culture," Nick Fraser says in his DVD interview, and Isaacs's knack for making films that reflect and express aspects of contemporary Britain reveals a filmmaker finely attuned to the national zeitgeist. Yet to me, there is something about Isaacs's slightly bemused, even-handed curiosity towards his characters that suggests a degree of tolerant detachment, a sense of perspective that comes with being slightly on the outside.

"I think you're right," Isaacs says when I bring up my disagreement with Fraser. "There's a big part of me that feels outside, generally. For instance, when I was younger I was never a member of any clubs. Sometimes I try to feel I've landed from another planet and I want to look at these people and the way they're living – the way we're living – from a slight distance, so we can maybe get more clarification. It's difficult because it requires a level of self-analysis that's complicated to go into. But there's a moment that resonated for me in *Men of the City* when Steve the street cleaner says 'Perhaps I'm just here to observe.' That's crucial for what I do."

■ *'Lift', 'Travellers', 'Calais: The Last Frontier', 'All White in Barking' and 'Men of the City' are all available on DVD from Second Run*

Monsters inc.

Aliens and romance propel Gareth Edwards's superb low-budget debut 'Monsters', says Trevor Johnston

With the funding landscape for British film currently in a period of transition (to say the least), Gareth Edwards stands out like a beacon of independent enterprise. After years honing his skills in television creating glossy CGI on BBC budgets, his debut feature *'Monsters'* mixes extensive location shooting in Central America, hundreds of effects shots and American leads in a British-financed movie that cost so little its producers and distributors Vertigo have already recouped their investment before the movie gets its UK release.

It helps that the result is a triumph for multi-talented Edwards – writer, director, DP and production designer. An original and engaging amalgam of road-movie romance, sci-fi fantasy and political observation set in the near future, *'Monsters'* conjures up an alien-infestation zone on the US-Mexican border that has been there so long the locals just deal with it. For two Yank interlopers caught in the wrong place at the wrong time, however, the task of getting back home before the creatures' annual migration still proves daunting.

"I knew nobody was going to come and give me a big pile of money," Edwards says of the birth pangs of his appealing genre hybrid, "but I worked out that if I did all the effects myself, I could just about hold out for six months. That gave me scope to do about 350 effects shots – not much for a CGI-driven movie – so then it became all about contrast. When you put something fantastical into a scene with no lighting and a roving documentary-style camera, that gives the effects a whole new level of reality and suddenly it's interesting."

When Edwards's short *'Factory Farmed'*, conceived as a test run, won the Sci-Fi Channel's 48-hour film contest in 2008, it convinced him he had the skills and technology to use this creative approach in a feature. Enter Vertigo producers Allan Niblo and James Richardson, who committed to a start date only three months on. This gave Edwards a new headache: he didn't have a script.

He did have a story – a guy and a girl bond as they traverse alien territory to get home – but knowing that the guerrilla-style, no-budget shoot would put the performers on their mettle, he felt he needed a real



Chemistry lessons: Edwards with Able

couple to provide instant chemistry. Vertigo suggested Scoot McNairy from *'In Search of a Midnight Kiss'*, who sent Edwards a photo of his actress girlfriend (now wife) Whitney Able. "I was really put off by the fact she was gorgeous," Edwards recalls, "because I really didn't want to make a film with beautiful people. However, I went and stayed with them at their apartment for five days, and realised that if I could capture even a fraction of the way they were with each other, then I'd really have something."

Indeed, while the CGI fantasy/grainy reality play-off will draw comparisons with *'Cloverfield'* and *'District 9'*, it's the subtle ebb and flow of this onscreen relationship that makes *'Monsters'* distinctive and affecting. The fact that Edwards achieved this shooting on the hoof in Costa Rica and Mexico with almost no crew makes it doubly remarkable.

"We'd get to a location we'd never seen before with maybe half an hour to find someone who could speak English to be in the scene," he recalls. "I'd look over at the translator, you'd hear the magic word 'extraterrestres' and there would be nodding. The real validation of that approach is the sales guy who haggles with Scoot and Whitney over extortionately expensive ferry tickets. He's brilliant, looks like someone in a Sergio Leone film and had never acted before."

"It's this myth that the magic happens when you're in a room typing a script as a sort of sacred contract to raise the finance. But that's all changing because computer graphics now enable you to add any sort of production value you need. That's gonna radically bring down the cost and hopefully give film-makers more freedom to shoot stuff without that pre-approval. The idea surely is not to make the films Hollywood can make, but to do the films they can't."

■ *'Monsters' is released on 3 December, and is our Film of the Month, reviewed on page 56*



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Alone in the dark

From being a communal experience, watching films has become an increasingly fragmented one, with serious implications for the future.

In a distant past, I lived in Ireland when the Celtic Tiger was yet to whelp. The atmosphere was far from grim, but it wasn't what you'd call liberal. Pubs were for men to drink stout in; cocktails were unheard of; late-night horror movies were where young people went when they wanted to be alone in the dark. This is not to say no attention was paid to the films, just that something sufficiently loud or striking had to happen for several hundred teenage tongues to be momentarily disengaged. I still recall one line that engendered a choice piece of repartee, even if I don't recall the film. The star, I think, was Barbara Steele, the impressively endowed sultry doyenne of Italian horror... who was born in Birkenhead. "H is for Heretic!" intoned the leering priest as he pressed a glowing brand shaped with that letter into Barbara's ample bosom. "And whore!" came a cry from the rear stalls, the word being pronounced, in a Dublin accent, in two syllables – "whoo-er". Doubtless there is a reader out there who will tell me the name of the film.

Anyway, this happened long before I became professionally engaged by – or even especially serious about – all things generic. No one had yet dreamed up torture porn, special effects were engagingly amateurish and the most unpleasant scene I can recall is when Barbara has a metal mask with nails on the inside nailed squishily on to her face in Mario Bava's *Mask of the Demon*.

One watched such films as part of a group, a communion even, nowhere more so than in the long-gone Cinéma Le Styx in Paris, where every fitting could be any colour so long as it was black. This was in the days when French cinemas still had *ouvreuses* – bad-tempered ladies who extorted 50 centimes for pointing their torches vaguely in the direction of your seat. But the one at the Styx, while still expecting her *sous*, would recognise you if you came regularly and welcome you back. It was like going into your local pub, but to see a film.

Enough of this nostalgia. I do have (you knew this, didn't you?) a more serious point. What sticks in my mind about the Dublin Savoy and the Paris Styx is that the interruptions were inspired by and directed at the film, much as worshippers join in a revivalist meeting with cries of



Technology puts us instantly in touch with the world. We are no longer an audience but a series of individuals tuned to a global chatroom

"Praise the Lord" – interjections that do not so much interrupt the proceedings as enhance them. Not so in a modern multiplex. Nowadays, cinema audiences subscribe to a quite different community. Technology puts us instantly in touch with the world, but often at the expense of interrupting our communications with the immediate. We are no longer an audience but a series of individuals tuned to a global chatroom. Seeing Hideo Nakata's disappointing movie version of Enda Walsh's play *Chatroom* in Cannes this year, one was struck by how far we have come since it was written. Chatrooms are a thing of the past. Chat itself no longer has walls.

At a recent press screening at a preview theatre so small anyone standing in the aisle blocked the projector beam, audience members repeatedly traipsed down it, mobile phones clutched to their ears, images from the film dancing across their backs. Either they didn't want to disturb fellow viewers (but weren't going to ignore the call or text) or the signal was too weak in the screening theatre and they needed to get outside. Either way, the global connection was more important than the immediate experience. Even at press screenings in Cannes, audience members regularly take calls or answer texts during screenings.

If you want a geezerish reaction here – a yearning for the long-gone times evinced in my opening paragraphs – feel free to add your own. Although I would personally prefer my viewings not to be interrupted by other people's long-distance communications, what interests me more about the phenomenon is that it is clearly

emblematic of how we now consume audiovisual images: not as part of a hermetic narrative, but as part of an enormous flow of information of which that narrative forms only a part.

Over the years, the context in which we have viewed moving pictures has progressively narrowed. In the 1930s we sat in large, often tiered, audiences. In the 1950s we began to watch them as families, physically separated from but synchronised with several million other families. Since the 1980s we have used home-entertainment devices to watch them in smaller groups, with no one else likely to be watching exactly the same film at exactly the same time. But it is over the past few years that this fragmentation has become complete, with many of us now watching films alone on a computer or a handheld device. From multitude to solo in less than a century.

The implications of this for the film industry are frightening. Outside the Hollywood studios and their marketing machines, the problem of sustaining our cinema has not been one of production – that can be subsidised, supported, relieved of tax or otherwise encouraged – but of distribution: how do the films get seen, where and by whom? And, above all, how are they paid for? In a world of fragmented moving-picture consumption, we're still groping for an answer to that. What we can be sure of is that the trend will not reverse itself. This may well not be the last you will hear from me on this issue. But I promise to leave Barbara Steele out of it next time. ♦♦ Nick Roddick

● **After Sebald – Place and Re-Enchantment** is a tribute to the late, great writer W.G. Sebald. The weekend-long event sees the world premiere of Grant Gee's feature-length essay film 'Patience (After Sebald)', which retraces a walk from Sebald's book 'The Rings of Saturn', and features contributions from a range of artists and commentators. Saturday includes a concert by Patti Smith, responding to Sebald's book 'After Nature'. The weekend also offers the rare chance to visit Orford Ness, off the coast of Suffolk, a haunting location that inspired Sebald's writing. 28-30 January, Snape Maltings, Suffolk. See www.aldeburgh.co.uk.

● **London Short Film Festival** returns for its eighth year and again showcases hundreds of recent short films from around the world. Various venues, London, 7-16 January.

● **Nam June Paik**, the great Korean-American artist, performer and composer who died in 2006, gets his first major UK retrospective this winter at Tate Liverpool. Works from all phases of Paik's long and remarkable career are represented, from music and television works to robot sculptures and large-scale video installations. Tate Liverpool, 17 December to 13 March.

● **TV Variety: The BFI Salutes the Palladium** celebrates the London Palladium, the legendary variety venue – famously used as the location for the climax of Hitchcock's 'The 39 Steps' – whose boards have been trod by an international roll-call of talent. The season comprises films and programmes honouring the golden age of TV variety. Throughout December and January, BFI Southbank, London.

● **Howard Hawks** gets the complete retrospective treatment at the BFI Southbank in the new year. The perennial classics such as 'His Girl Friday', 'Gentlemen Prefer Blondes' and 'To Have and Have Not' are too numerous to list, but alongside them are lesser-seen early titles such as 'The Dawn Patrol' and 'A Girl in Every Port', the latter with Louise Brooks. BFI Southbank, London, throughout January and February.

Hawks's Chandler adaptation 'The Big Sleep' (left) also screens in an extended run at cinemas nationwide.



Like her past work, Sofia Coppola's 'Somewhere' is set in the rarefied world of the rich and unhappy. But what do her films – and reactions to them – tell us about the perils of fame, asks **Hannah McGill**? Overleaf **Isabel Stevens** talks to the director about capturing the mood and light of Los Angeles on film

HOTEL CALIFORNIA



TIME OUT
Film star Johnny Marco (Stephen Dorff, above left and facing page) attempts to bond with daughter Cleo (Elle Fanning, above right)

Fame can do awful things to a person, as Cecil B. DeMille observes in *Sunset Blvd.* Playing himself and defending his fictional protégée Norma Desmond against the charge of her having been a “monster” at the height of her notoriety, he says: “A dozen press agents working overtime can do terrible things to the human spirit.”

It is with this highly specialised strain of spiritual damage that Sofia Coppola's *Somewhere* concerns itself – via a story largely played out on the very same boulevard, in the celeb-worn corridors of the Chateau Marmont hotel. Residing there (as Billy Wilder did for a portion of his career) is Johnny Marco, a beautiful and very famous movie star, played by the beautiful and not-that-famous movie star Stephen Dorff.

Johnny is not a monster in the Desmond mould, but you can see how he might become one: he is enslaved by a tedious PR schedule and beset on all sides by panting groupies, angry ex-girlfriends, journalists who ask him crushingly dull questions and anonymous haters who threaten him by text. His 11-year-old daughter Cleo (Elle Fanning) offers him a slender bridge back to reality when she descends on him for an unplanned visit as her mother, Johnny's ex Layla, heads off on an impromptu trip. But Johnny has a jaunt of his own to take, to an awards ceremony in Milan. Cleo, a singularly adaptable and uncomplaining pre-teen, comes with him. Since he's slowed down anyway by a wrist injury sustained during some standard-issue drunken debauch, Johnny finds himself enjoying time with his child, rather than simply doing his court-ordered duty.

It's a shift of intent neatly captured in a scene in which Johnny watches Cleo perform an ice dance lasting pretty much the full duration of Gwen Stefani's syrupy pop number 'Cool': at first he looks antsy and a bit embarrassed; then he seems to get interested in the artistry of what she's doing; finally he just looks proud. It's a nice, if idealised distillation of the experience of parenthood.



◀ And in case we miss what's going on, there are always Stefani's lyrics to help us out: "After all that we've been through... I know we're cool."

Gilded cages

Being cool is not a problem for Sofia Coppola, of course. Muse of Marc Jacobs', Louis Vuitton guest designer, ex-wife of Spike Jonze, friend of Sonic Youth, and of course daughter of Francis: her implacable hipster cred is as securely moored as her Hollywood pedigree. *Somewhere* – her fourth feature film and the recipient of the Golden Lion at the 2010 Venice Film Festival – honours her own swiftly established traditions by focusing on the boredom and angst suffered by the ostensibly privileged. Thematically, *Somewhere* particularly echoes Coppola's most critically and commercially successful outing *Lost in Translation*, for which she won a Best Original Screenplay Oscar in 2003. Both films are predominantly set in hotels, both note the loneliness and routine humiliations endured by celebrities on the road and both locate hope in a spark of fellow feeling between a jaded famous bloke and a fresh young girl.

However, other elements are common to all her films: everyone has lots of languorous leisure time; no one has to work in the conventional sense (you do wonder if Coppola actually knows anyone who has to work in the conventional sense); lasting contentment eludes everyone, despite all the room service and so forth; human spirits are damaged. *The Virgin Suicides* (1999) saw suburban teens top themselves en masse, despite possessing beauty, material wealth and parental adoration, because of something to do with "the imprisonment of being a girl"; *Marie Antoinette* (2005) portrayed a sweet featherbrain beguiled by the luxuries of queendom but thrown by the expectation that she should do boring old politics in return.

It's always been tricky to determine just how much irony Coppola intends when she presents extreme comfort as a cruel and stifling predicament. When, in *Somewhere*, Johnny places a tearful late-night distress call to his ex Layla, she has a dry suggestion for him: "Why don't you try volunteering or something?" Coppola lets us guess how to read this – is Johnny receiving a rare nugget of constructive advice from one of the few people who know him well, or is Layla's suggestion intended to exemplify the thoughtless and judgmental jabs routinely doled out to the rich by those who have no sense of their inner pain?

Familiarity with Coppola's other work rather suggests the latter. Her central characters are uncomfortable by the glimmer of their gilded cages and thus live quite adrift from any sense that their unusual material security might carry with it the moral responsibility to give something back. Why should more be expected of them when they already weather the daily misery of being looked at all the time and having too much stuff? And volunteering – that would mean interacting with, like, people. Who might not be cool! Threatening

is the mass of humanity that exists beyond one's elected coterie: cruel schoolmates in *The Virgin Suicides*; brash Japanese people who keep inconsiderately speaking in Japanese in *Lost in Translation*; horrid, gaping peasants in *Marie Antoinette*; brash Italian people who keep inconsiderately speaking Italian in *Somewhere*.

Muddled beasts

The matter of what Coppola might mean by all of this is complicated by her own status as a child of fame and wealth, which unavoidably suggests a degree of autobiography in her characterisations of the materially spoiled and spiritually starved. One imagines that the director has come up against her fair share of bitterness, envy and exhortations – if not to volunteer, then to be thankful for what she's got. (In fact one does not have to imagine – one can refer to the countless critics and bloggers who are quick to draw attention to Coppola's connections when assessing her work and the high-level attention that it receives.) But is she smirking with us at the cloistered self-pity of her characters, or scolding us for our reductive assumption that money should bring happiness?

A third option: is she, like Woody Allen and Bill Douglas and Claude Chabrol, just drawing on her own life experience? (How deafening the accusations of let-them-eat-cake condescension would be if she were to essay a film about factory workers.)

The trouble is that it's perilous for the very fortunate to complain, unless it is only to be heard by the rest of the very fortunate. For that poor and huddled majority to whom 'rich and famous' is a distant, dreamed-of realm, missives of dissatisfaction therefrom are either incomprehensible, blindingly irritating or unwholesomely satisfying on the level of *schadenfreude*. Earlier this year, *The Guardian* printed an extract from actress Natascha McElhone's memoir discussing her experience of being suddenly widowed while pregnant with her third child. A reader wrote in to express, with singular bitterness, the wish that the paper "could have carried a piece on grief that was not about someone so rich, talented and beautiful". To that reader, McElhone was not entitled to feel sad – her high cheekbones and (presumably) nice home furnishings should have compensated her for the whole dead-husband, fatherless-children thing. A related brand of vengeful envy drives the celebrity-focused gossip media: awed fascination with fame coexists with prurient delight in the tragedies it cannot prevent. The celebrity thus emerges as a beast as muddled as some Hieronymous Bosch hybrid: part heavenly body, part pariah dog. The most envied and desired members of society are also the most harried, belittled and abused.

Arguably, Coppola's films combat this puritan impulse to punish those to whom much is given. They ask us to extend our empathy beyond society's more obviously damaged cases to those who are oppressed by the presumption that they should be in bliss. It's a contention that's hard to



palate, but amply borne out by the documentary evidence. It doesn't take an exhaustive survey of the rich and beautiful to establish that fame and fortune have a singularly poor record at supplying fulfilment. Great beauty invites exploitation and objectification; fabulous wealth lures false friends and yes-men; public recognition brings relentless intrusion and gossip. Do first-class travel, fancy threads and unlimited casual sex provide compensation for all that? The fantasies of generations of stargazers insist so, but the mass of tragedy-laden superstar biographies would argue otherwise.

As for the director's own genetic privilege, it's no given that what every budding director needs to secure lasting credibility is a famous daddy. Ask Jennifer Lynch, Nick and Zoe Cassavetes or Sofia Coppola's brother Roman (producer on *Somewhere*). No doubt Coppola's surname opened doors for her, but it can also be argued that her work has largely held its own critically *despite* her breeding, in the face of many a resentful commentator who would have loved it to be wholly unwatchable.

Still, we don't learn much about why the pain of Johnny Marco ought to matter to us. *Somewhere* is

Missives of dissatisfaction from the rich and famous are either blindingly irritating or satisfying on the level of schadenfreude



LADIES' MAN
In Johnny's world
women are beautiful
objects to be lured into
bed, or a simpering
annoyance to avoid

enjoyably acute about the ludicrous minutiae of the junket circuit (we see Johnny perched on a box in order to match the height of his co-star for photos, and pestered for a contribution to a book called *Workout Secrets of Hollywood Stars*), yet the protagonist himself lacks definition. Johnny is certainly no Norma Desmond, besotted with the romance of the movies. He never speaks about his films, except to remind people he does his own stunts, and he passes his unread scripts to Cleo for assessment. Luxury living isn't exactly his speed either: fancy car aside, he lives like a student (albeit one without money worries). A succession of band T-shirts testifies to a scratchily authentic punk-rock past that he either had or wants to pretend he had.

Unlike a Depp or a Pitt or a Franco, Johnny appears to have no intellectual or creative tributaries feeding his acting, unless you count a fondness for *Guitar Hero*. His one defining characteristic is an incontinent sexuality, but we can't know whether his sex habit is self-medication for the discomforts of fame, or his fame a useful means to indulge a pre-existing appetite. And actually, we don't see much evidence for his being a tiger in the sack: the one time that we see him get a woman into bed, he falls asleep giving her head. A pair of privately hired twin pole dancers regale him with such coy routines and innocent grins that they might be regarded less as sex objects and more as inadequate stand-ins for Cleo's sunny presence.

In his blank, buff beauty, his childlike indulgences and his unfocused dissatisfaction, Johnny

resembles a Bret Easton Ellis creation (indeed, he shares his problem of sinister text messages with the protagonist of Ellis's *Imperial Bedrooms*). Coppola's characters, however, don't meet the sort of monsters that lurk in Ellis's tales. Johnny might vaguely suspect that an SUV is following him, but Coppola resists the notion of larger plots or power structures influencing her characters' experiences (one reason that *Marie Antoinette*—a film that really needed some political context behind it—failed to take flight). There is no such thing as society. There are only men and women and—according to the terms of divorce settlements—their families.

Waterworks

Perhaps, after all, it's not their defence of privilege that makes Coppola's films troubling, but this hermetic quality. The characters' disconnectedness creates a torpid emotional climate and, though they experience bereavements, separations and bloody peasant revolts, Coppola seems most at ease when their stronger feelings can be masked by a bout of tongue-in-cheek exhibitionism or a languid hipster shrug. Just as sexual passion is a bit *infra dig*, spontaneous verbal communication is unreliable. When they do have something to say, people miss their moments, are crippled by inarticulacy or self-consciousness, or are drowned out by the surrounding clamour. Two of Coppola's key emotional pay-offs are delivered against serious auditory challenges: in *Lost in Translation*, Bob's final whispered words to Charlotte exclude the

audience, while in *Somewhere* Johnny offers his late *mea culpa* to Cleo over the mad whirr of helicopter blades. At its best, this style creates a gestural language that's both satisfying and emotionally resonant. The most pleasing parts of *Somewhere* are bits of inconsequential business in the hotel room—Cleo taking pleasure in preparing breakfast, Johnny ineptly trying to pull the cast off his arm. And there are more deeply affecting moments—hold on to your hearts when Fanning executes a piercingly authentic burst of waterworks. But restraint is the dominant mode. As in Coppola's other films, overt emotion and excessive verbosity are regarded with suspicion: they're signifiers of insincerity, phoney luvviedom, rudeness even.

"What *ees* the most *beautiful* thing you've done in Italy?" gushes a bimbo television presenter when Johnny arrives at his Milan hotel. Politely, he reminds her that he's only just landed. On stage at the awards, he's mobbed by further bimbos and made a reluctant participant in their song-and-dance routine; eye contact with a laughing Cleo affirms that amid the vulgarity, they know they're cool. (A lot of the women in *Somewhere* are vulgar or silly, a fact that might be picked up on more if Coppola were a man.) Certainly one sometimes recoils a little from the strain of cooler-than-thou snobbery in her humour, as with a bug-eyed caricature of a PR girl who oversoliciously guides Johnny around and ministers to his needs.

Working with Gus Van Sant's regular DP Harris Savides, Coppola enlists a camera style that is simplicity itself: a fixed viewpoint; long, luxurious takes; no sharp edits. The music-video affectations of previous films—mouth-watering cake montages in *Marie Antoinette*, mouth-watering Josh Hartnett gliding around to Air's 'Sexy Boy' in *The Virgin Suicides*—are notable by their absence.

It's been remarked that after the divided response to the ambitious *Marie Antoinette*, Coppola is playing it safe with *Somewhere*. Gently comic vignettes are not exactly risky, and no one is going to hope that daddy and daughter won't reconnect (particularly not the guilty, overworked, middle-aged dads who make the big decisions in the film industry). Even that process is a mild one, since Coppola's narrative is not aggressive enough to show a badly fractured relationship or have Johnny or Cleo undergo major change. Instead, a slightly flawed but basically loving father has a nice time with the lovely daughter who he doesn't see quite as much as either would like. It's the plot of post-divorce weekends the world over, except that everyone has a slightly sweeter disposition than in real life.

Perhaps it's part of Coppola's project to counter negative assumptions about celebrity offspring, but it's hard to see how much closer-up she can usefully get to her hermetically sealed, sad bohemians. For all its throwaway pleasures, *Somewhere* risks saying altogether too much about itself with Cleo's ice dance: a dainty, cold, stiff-limbed exercise in skimming the surface.

A KIND OF SOFTER FEELING

Sofia Coppola talks to **Isabel Stevens** about the glossy, solitary, in-between Los Angeles existence she evokes in 'Somewhere'

Isabel Stevens: 'Somewhere' is your most pared-down, restrained film yet: the camera's often held at a distance and there's not much dialogue. How did you arrive at that approach?

Sofia Coppola: After *Marie Antoinette*, I was thinking about approaching a film in a totally different way, to try to make something really minimal. It was also to do with meeting Harris Savides, the cinematographer—we shot a commercial together and talked about how simply you could make a film, how simply you could tell a story. So I thought about that kind of approach when I was writing the script.

IS: The father/daughter relationship in particular is very minimal and unsentimental.

SC: I wanted to have a sweet father/daughter relationship without being too sappy. I remember writing some things—like when they're in the pool underwater having the tea party and I thought, "Oh no, that's too corny." But then I thought, "Oh no, let's try it," and it ended up being a moment that I liked. I guess sometimes you have to risk being corny, but I did try to keep it in check. I wanted the whole thing to be understated and subtle—I like that, it seems more like life to me. I feel like in movies they have to make things more dramatic than in reality, but this one I wanted to be more naturalistic and to see how little details can express emotions—more like in life.

IS: After deciding on this approach, how did you go about writing the script?

SC: I like finding visual ways to tell a story. I started with the image of him [Johnny, played by Stephen Dorff] in the Ferrari on the track. I wanted to think of visuals to explain the character and the state he's in. At the time I was living in Paris, taking some time off after *Marie Antoinette*, and had had a child. I was so far away from California that I was thinking about it and, every once in a while, a friend would come to town and bring a weekly tabloid from America—they looked so exotic in Paris. So I was thinking about Los Angeles and the pop culture, I was thinking about movies like *Shampoo* and *American Gigolo* that really captured the city at that time, and I wanted to do something that showed contemporary LA and my view of it.

IS: Landscape plays a major role in your films—Tokyo in 'Lost in Translation', Versailles in 'Marie Antoinette'.

SC: I wanted to film LA as it looks and feels. The light is very specific there. And I wanted to capture a certain side of its pop and celebrity culture—the pole-dancing twins [in the film], for example, they were from the Playboy Mansion.

IS: In 'Lost in Translation' there are lots of shots over the city. In 'Somewhere' there's only one towards the end.

SC: When I visited Tokyo I was a foreigner discovering this whole other planet, so I wanted to show that. Here, Johnny's really stuck in a world he's less excited about—it's more mundane. It's [set] within his world, so it's less expansive.

IS: Do you think of all your films as being connected in a visual way?

SC: Whenever I start a film, I always have visual references in mind, mainly from photography. For *Somewhere*, it was Helmut Newton's photographs that he did around the Chateau Marmont, and then other photographers in LA, like my old photography teacher Paul Jasmin, and Bruce Weber, who did some of Matt Dillon—I looked at them for the style of this young movie star. I feel like each of my films has their visual style, but I think there's a connection between them because they come from my own aesthetic. But in this one, because I wanted it to be so minimal and naturalistic, I didn't want you to notice the camera, so the camera doesn't move a lot. It's shot in a very simple way so you're just alone with this character.

IS: William Eggleston's photographs often spring to mind when I watch your films.

SC: Yeah, I really admire his work. I didn't look at his photos specifically for this film, but both Harris and I really like his work. The lenses we shot *Somewhere* on were the ones my dad used for *Rumble Fish* [1983]. My brother had saved them and Harris wanted to use them—they're old beautiful lenses, so they have a different look, less sharp and with a kind of softer feeling. But it's also nostalgic, because I loved the way *Rumble Fish* looked.

IS: You've said before that when you start thinking about a film you often have an atmosphere in mind. Was that the case here?

SC: With *Lost in Translation* I started with the idea of Tokyo and how to show that. And here I started with the character of this guy and by thinking about what kind of state he was in. I listen to music when I'm writing, and there's a certain atmosphere that comes from that. I like trying to create a mood, so you're in a different world for the time you're watching the movie.

IS: This is your first film from a male perspective.

SC: As *Marie Antoinette* was so girly and feminine, I was in the mood to do something different. There were some news articles about young successful actors in crisis, so I was thinking about that. And then there was the challenge about having to write from a different point of view.

IS: There's not very much dialogue in the film—did you have lots of conversations with Stephen Dorff and Elle Fanning before shooting?

SC: The scenes that were scripted are pretty simple, but even though it's minimal dialogue, it's important to the story. You can express a lot with a glance or a gesture. I did talk with the actors—Stephen understood that a lot of it was him just being alone, smoking a cigarette, yet I feel like you can learn a lot about him. I think he liked it—it's challenging for an actor not to do a lot of 'performing', to be alone with a crew there. I think both him and Elle understood the style of the movie.

IS: Compared with Bob (Bill Murray's character) in 'Lost in Translation' Johnny is much harder to empathise with.

SC: I didn't really think about him in comparison with Bill Murray's character specifically. The film is really about an existential crisis that anyone can



TWO SETS OF EYES
Cinematographer Harris Savides lines up his shot with Coppola; he influenced the birth of her film's story



The lenses we shot 'Somewhere' on were the ones my dad used for 'Rumble Fish'

relate to, even though it's set in an exotic world. The reason I cast Stephen is that I know he's a really sweet, genuine guy and – given the character's pretty flawed and not that likeable – that that would come through. And I liked the fact that you hadn't seen him in 20 movies last year and that you don't know that much about his personal life. I always thought Stephen was a great actor. Mainly, I think he was just right for the part.

IS: Johnny's world is one you're very familiar with. Were there a lot of autobiographical elements in the film?

SC: I am familiar with that world, so there are some aspects that come from things I've seen and stories I've heard. Or things I've made up from what could have been. It's not so autobiographical, but it is informed by familiarity. The little girl is based on a friend of mine whose parents are in Hollywood, since I didn't grow up there, but then I tried to put in memories from my own childhood to make it personal.

IS: There's a lot of attention to detail in the background – I liked your inclusion of the Ed Ruscha print in Johnny's room in Chateau Marmont.

SC: I wanted all of those elements to make it feel real. Stephen's familiar with Ed Ruscha and told me about that work: it says 'Cold Beer Beautiful Girls', I think. I've always loved his art and I liked the idea that Johnny might have bought it in a gallery but had nowhere to put it, so it's just leaning there in the plastic.

IS: And Ruscha's art is all about LA, so there's a nice link.

SC: Yeah, I always think about him when I think about LA. I also thought about the words that he uses [superimposed over his images] for the film's title, which I thought kind of related to his work.

IS: So the film's title didn't have anything to do with the song 'Somewhere'?

SC: No, it came from these vague words Ruscha uses – and the idea that the character knows he needs to go somewhere but doesn't know where.

IS: A scene in the film that really stands out is where Johnny is having the mask made and the camera lingers on him as his face is covered in gunk.

SC: That was actually the first thing we filmed. I wanted to do some things in real time, but I didn't know how long we'd actually stay with him. It always makes me claustrophobic when I see that scene. I was just trying to think of odd things an actor would do in his work without showing him on a film set – they learn strange skills for different movies. And then there was the visual metaphor of him being stuck.

IS: You never show him on a film set, just around the promotional mechanics of the film industry.

SC: I wanted it to be an in-between time for him. But I also didn't want it to be about the film business – that's the world he's in and we allude to it, but it's about his time in-between when he's alone.

■ 'Somewhere' is released on 10 December, and is reviewed on page 84

Reader offers

COMPETITIONS

CHARLIE CHAPLIN: Three 'Keystone' collections to be won

Charlie Chaplin joined the Keystone Film Company in late 1913 and made 35 films in a single year, developing his much loved persona, the 'Tramp'. This stunning four-disc set from BFI features the 34 surviving Chaplin Keystone films, including *Tillie's Punctured Romance*. The films have been reconstructed and restored

over an eight-year period in a collaborative effort by the BFI National Archive and a number of international organisations. They are presented with new musical accompaniment; extras include a short documentary about the restoration efforts. We have three box-sets to give away.

To be in with a chance of winning, please answer the following question:

Q. Which one of these Keystone films marked the debut of Chaplin's 'Tramp' character?

- a. Making a Living
- b. Kid Auto Races at Venice
- c. Tillie's Punctured Romance



WIN

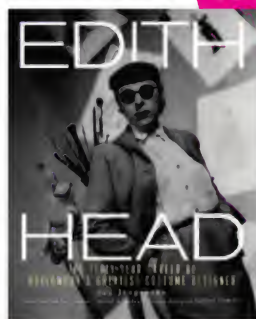
EDITH HEAD: Three books to be won

Costume designer Edith Head racked up an unprecedented 35 Oscar nods and 400 film credits over the course of her 50-year career. Head was the most influential designer of Hollywood's golden era, working on *All About Eve*, *Sunset Blvd.* and *Rear Window*, to name just a few. Her life and work is celebrated in this mammoth new book published by Running Press. Drawing on material held in the Edith Head Archives of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, this collection includes rare and never-before-seen sketches, costume test shots and behind-the-scenes photographs of the leading ladies she dressed.

We have three copies to give away. To be in with a chance of winning, please answer the following question:

Q. Which one of these films won Best Costume Design for Edith Head at the Academy Awards?

- a. Sabrina Fair
- b. Sweet Charity
- c. Funny Face



WIN

ARTIFICIAL EYE: Three sets of DVDs to be won

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WIN

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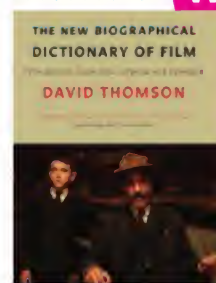
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- b. There Will Be Blood
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WIN

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Ken Loach, 1979
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Jack Clayton, 1961
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David Fincher and Apichatpong Weerasethakul vying for the top spot in the S&S annual poll proves at least that auteur cinema is alive and well across the globe, says **Nick James**

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

What the most important films of the last year were depends on what you want from cinema in a time of austerity. That's the conclusion we've drawn after canvassing 85 of our contributors for the top five new films they saw in the course of 2010, and their other highlights of the year. Some will argue that the phenomenal success of James Cameron's *Avatar* (released worldwide in December 2009) shows that a big spectacle can be an effective antidote to hard times. Some will even reduce Kathryn Bigelow's 2010 Best Picture Oscar win for *The Hurt Locker* (released earlier in 2009) to a mere snub to *Avatar*. But in this magazine, *Avatar* doesn't feature in anyone's list (our critics' antipathy towards CGI spectacles is just as pointed in regard to that other huge box-office phenomenon, Christopher Nolan's *Inception*, which gained just one vote). *The Hurt Locker*, by contrast, came joint second last year. The sort of cinema the wider public flocks to see, then, bears little relationship to what our 85 contributors want to celebrate.

But that doesn't mean that our writers are homophobic. This year's winning film is David Fincher's *The Social Network*, the topical drama about the founder of Facebook that's achieved a rare kind of all-round success (at the time of writing it's taken £9 million in the UK alone). No fewer than 22 of our writers listed it; aside from Aaron Sorkin's dialogue fireworks, I would say that its appeal is down to the narrative's gripping relationship to something we all worry about: what online networking is doing to our sense of identity.

Fincher's film also answers the complaint made in these pages about US cinema in comparison with last year's winner *A Prophet* (so strong that it's again in our top ten, having been released in 2010 in the UK and many other territories). It's good that an American film has won so much across-the-board support, given that last year Jonathan Romney was moved to remark: "It seems to have become an article of faith that there's no longer much point looking for revelations in US cinema."

No one should conclude from *The Social Network*'s success, however, that our constituency has become more sheeplike. Almost 200 titles were selected in the various top fives; our prime representative of a world of cinema that's completely different from Hollywood is Apichatpong Weerasethakul's *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives*, which received 19 votes to gain second place – one of three films from outside Europe and the US to make it into our top ten (actually a top 12, owing to a five-way tie for eighth place). The others are *Nostalgia for the Light* (one of two rare documentary choices) and *Poetry* – and this despite the increasing difficulty in distributing such films.

For those interested in British cinema, the event of the year had to be the new government's shock decision to abolish the UK Film Council. The UKFC's shabby treatment of the BFI made it hard for us to grieve, but latterly their shifts in policy had been heading in the right direction. The presence in our top ten of both Mike Leigh's *Another Year* and newcomer Clio Barnard's *The Arbor* is testament to a British film sector that, this year at least, has been a little more daring.

Olivier Assayas's *Carlos*, at number four, demonstrates that filmmakers haven't lost their fascination with terrorism as a subject for thrillers. Originally made for television, it's also likely to prove a harbinger of many more film-auteur-led TV dramas in the future, the most obvious being Todd Haynes's forthcoming *Mildred Pierce*. Haynes's move to TV is an indication of the parlous state of affairs in US indie cinema, which makes Debra Granik's *Winter's Bone* a triumph against the grain. The same can be said, for different reasons, about Luca Guadagnino's *I Am Love* (equal sixth), which revives the promise of a vanished kind of romantic European cinema of ravishing opulence.

Jean-Luc Godard's command over us is probably eternal, even if his former confrères in the *nouvelle vague* have begun to leave us – among the most poignant losses of the year were Eric Rohmer and Claude Chabrol. Godard's *Film socialisme* may be hard to grapple with, but it would be equally hard for such a veteran to find a more colourful, inventive and demonstrative way of shoving out his hand and saying: "No comment."

The log-jam of titles at number eight is followed – off the bottom of the top 12 – by another log-jam tied at number 13 (*Aurora*, *Enter the Void*, *The Illusionist*, *Meek's Cutoff*, *Toy Story 3*), although two of those titles have yet to be released in the UK, and are sure to feature more strongly next year. But what this further suggests is that 2010 was not a great year for cinema of the kind that makes a big cultural impact – or, like *Avatar*, assumes it does. It was rather more like the steady rise of an allotment cinema of smaller successes (allotment as in a patch of ground on which you can grow flowers, fruit and vegetables).

If there is any important movement in cinema right now, it must be this diffusion of separate entities – the products, if you like, of a ragbag union of loners. It's a long way, for instance, from *The Social Network* to *The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu*. But isn't that just another way of saying that auteur cinema is alive and well all over the globe?

The Top Ten

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 The Social Network
(David Fincher, USA) | =8 The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu
(Autobiografia lui Nicolae Ceausescu)
(Andrei Ujica, Romania) |
| 2 Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives
(Lung Boonmee raluek chat)
(Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Thailand/UK/France/Germany/Spain/Netherlands/USA) | =8 Film socialisme
(Jean-Luc Godard, Switzerland/France) |
| 3 Another Year (Mike Leigh, UK) | =8 Nostalgia for the Light
(Nostalgia de la luz)
(Patricio Guzmán, France/Germany/Chile) |
| 4 Carlos (Olivier Assayas, France/Germany/Belgium) | =8 Poetry (Si)
(Lee Changdong, South Korea) |
| 5 The Arbor (Clio Barnard, UK) | =8 A Prophet (Un Prophète)
(Jacques Audiard, France/Italy) |
| =6 Winter's Bone
(Debra Granik, USA) | |
| =6 I Am Love (Io sono l'amore)
(Luca Guadagnino, Italy) | |

■ The complete version of this poll, including every comment made on every film, will be available online on 7 December at www.bfi.org.uk/sightandsound. Contributors whose lists we were unfortunately unable to feature on the following pages for lack of space include: James Bell, Nick Bradshaw, Dylan Cave, Roger Clarke, Kieron Corless, Chris Darke, Thomas Dawson, William Fowler, Peter Hames, Sophie Ivan, Kevin Jackson, Philip Kemp, Geoffrey Macnab, Demetrios Matheou, Hannah McGill, James Mottram, Vic Pratt, Nicolas Rapold, Jasper Sharp, Anna Smith, Samuel Wigley and Jason Wood. Their contributions will all be online.

13

15 APR
-6 MAY
20 JUN
-7 AUG
-4 OCT
-6 JUL



16 JAN
11 MAR

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THE ROUND-UP

GEOFF ANDREW

Head of film programme, BFI Southbank, UK

Aurora (Cristi Puiu, Romania/France/Switzerland/Germany) This follow-up to *The Death of Mr Lazarescu* is one of the most uncompromisingly rigorous films of the year, an often defiantly taciturn, even uneventful study of a day and a half in the life of a man who also happens to take the lives of others.

Certified Copy (Copie conforme) (Abbas Kiarostami, France/Italy/Belgium) The Iranian master's most 'commercial' movie (it stars Juliette Binoche and may be seen as a Tuscan-set love story) refuses easy readings even after repeat viewings. Full of ambiguities, absences, ironies and intentional inconsistencies, it's a teasing (if finally affecting) film in the conditional: what if?

Nostalgia for the Light (Patricio Guzmán) Astronomy, archaeology, Chilean history and politics – Guzmán's sly, measured essay excavates all manner of things on its deeply humane mission to place the pain of personal loss within a far wider philosophical context.

Of Gods and Men (Des hommes et des dieux) (Xavier Beauvois, France) You want straightforward narrative? This is it – though Beauvois's taken-from-life account of a North African monastery threatened by Muslim fundamentalists avoids thriller cliché to provide a subtly insightful and moving study of fear, faith and fatal intolerance.

Poetry (Si) (Lee Changdong, South Korea) See box p. 28.

Highlights: In a year with an unusually experimental Palme d'Or winner, *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives*, I also found three other admirably audacious but accessible films particularly rewarding: José María de Orbe's *Father (Aita)*, Michelangelo Frammartino's *Le quattro volte* and Lodge Kerrigan's *Rebecca H. (Return to the Dogs)* – all engagingly mysterious, cinematically witty and emotionally affecting, as well as being philosophically and formally fascinating.

Otherwise, Manoel de Oliveira's *Rite of Spring (Acto da primavera, 1963)* was for me the restoration of the year, while Bernardo Bertolucci's intelligent, often very funny onstage interview at BFI Southbank in October was a joyous celebration of cinephilia.

MICHAEL ATKINSON

Critic, USA

The Red Riding Trilogy (Julian Jarrold, James Marsh & Anand Tucker, UK)

A Prophet (Jacques Audiard)

Dogtooth (Kynodontas) (Yorgos Lanthimos, Greece)

I Am Love (Luca Guadagnino)

Mother (Bong Joon-ho, South Korea)

ROBIN BAKER

Head curator, BFI National Film Archive, UK

Another Year (Mike Leigh)

The Arbor (Clio Barnard)

Still Walking (Aruitemo, Aruitemo)

(Kore-eda Hirokazu, Japan)

Winter's Bone (Debra Granik)

A Prophet (Jacques Audiard)

If everyone included this last year, then my vote goes to:

Louderes (Jessica Hausner,

Austria/Germany/France)

Highlights: The BFI's restoration of Hepworth and Stow's *Alice in Wonderland* (1903) became an improbable YouTube hit. The sense of awe and delighted incredulity it provoked among viewers more likely to seek out videos of sneezing baby pandas was inspiring. Sitting with an audience in Beijing as Xie Fei discussed the experience of filming *Black Snow* in Tiananmen Square in 1989 was revelatory – not just about the director's work, but about contemporary China too.

As I watched Herbert Ponting's *The Great White Silence* (1924), its original tinting and toning finally restored, his haunting images of Scott's ill-fated expedition to the Antarctic glowed once again like stained glass.

The two films that made me weep were *Toy Story 3* and John Krish's *They Took Us to the Sea* (1961). Both masterful and both in their very different ways about the end of childhood.

Observing two of our leading directors on a visit to the National Film Archive poring over Carol Reed's annotated shooting script for *The Third Man* like boys encountering the Holy Grail was a joy. Watching the only copy of Ken Loach's 1970 documentary made for Save the Children, which is prevented from leaving the vaults of the BFI National Archive by a court injunction, I was privileged to discover that it's every bit as brilliant, provocative and formally radical as you could hope or expect.

PETER BISKIND

Critic, USA

The Social Network (David Fincher)

Winter's Bone (Debra Granik)

I always find it exciting to discover a new, gifted filmmaker, even one who's new just to me, and I so admired *Winter's Bone* that I checked out Granik's first feature *Down to the Bone*, and liked it almost as much. It's so hard to make drug films these days (this latter one was released in 2004) without falling into all the clichés that have nearly destroyed the genre, but Granik succeeds.

Made in Dagenham

(Nigel Cole, UK/Ireland)

The King's Speech

(Tom Hooper, UK/Australia)

Another Year (Mike Leigh)

ANTON BITEL

Academic and critic, UK

1 (Pater Sparrow, Hungary)

Red White & Blue (Simon Rumley, USA)

Simon Rumley's slow-burning tripartite drama spirals inexorably towards parallel acts of misdirected vengeance, and in the ellipses and silences of its economic narrative lurk the darkest aspects of the American psyche, as well as a fine performance from Noah Taylor.

Winter Vacation (Han jia)

(Li Hongqi, China)

"One day after another, it seems as if life never ends," deadpans one of the bored young characters in the latest film by China's answer to Jarmusch, Kaurismäki and Roy Andersson. *Winter Vacation* offers up the tedium and aimlessness of provincial life as a sly rejoinder to China's post-Olympics image of progress and prosperity. It's bleak, spare – and absurdly funny.

Amer (Hélène Cattet & Bruno Forzani,

France/Belgium)

Cattet and Forzani have lovingly crafted this surrealist homage to the thematic preoccupations, visual stylings and musical cues of the 1970s *giallo*. An unnerving triptych in which conventional narrative has been replaced by nightmarish perspective and thrillingly tactile imagery.

Skeletons (Nick Whitfield, UK)

Nick Whitfield's feature debut is a quirkily comic psychodrama of family, memory and loss, mixing *Inception*-style brain-bending tropes with Pythonesque English banality. Rarely is such high concept presented in so low a key; the result, for all its cultish oddity, is reassuringly human.

Highlight: Interviewing Stanford professor Bernardo Huberman about using social networks to predict box-office revenue. A fascinating glimpse into the way that Web 2.0 both reflects and shapes our cinemagoing experience.

PETER BRADSHAW

'The Guardian', UK

Another Year (Mike Leigh)

Kick-Ass (Matthew Vaughn, UK/USA)

Like an intravenous injection of pure monosodium glutamate, *Kick-Ass* delivered a blast of energy, incorrectness and anarchy with a tale of adolescent wish-fulfilment that has genuinely captured the spirit of comic books in a way nothing else has.

The Other Guys (Adam McKay, USA)

This brilliant frat-boy comedy triumphantly survived some critical condescension and dullness, and

showed an admirable devotion simply to getting as many laughs as possible.

Enter the Void (Gaspar Noé, France/USA/Germany/Italy/Japan/Canada)

Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (Apichatpong Weerasethakul)

Highlight: One great pleasure of 2010 was the Frank Capra retrospective, which gave us relatively unconsidered gems like 1932's *Forbidden* – a film with Capra's traditional yellow-press journalists and pork-barrel politicians, which allowed us to ponder how this, and other of his films, fed into the creation of *Citizen Kane*.

NICOLE BRENEZ

Critic, France

Dystopia Files (Mark Tribe, USA)

A homage to the anonymous demonstrators who struggle against injustice day by day, this is a visual supplement to Howard Zinn's book *A People's History of the United States*.

Film socialisme (Jean-Luc Godard)

The End of the World Starts With One Lie – First Part (Lech Kowalski, France/USA)

A brilliant deconstruction of Robert Flaherty's *Louisiana Story*, this first section of a fresco focuses on the New Orleans oil spill.

X+ (Marilyne Negro, France)

Without respite, cinema records silhouettes, groups, crowds, masses – fleeting passers-by of the era they're crossing, walk-on parts bearing witness to the zeitgeist that carries them. *X+* explores the visual and sonic forms of presence thanks to which the silver-emulsion imprints of the countless unknown human beings who make up the thread of humanity linger or dissolve.

Highlight: 'Conversation avec un réalisateur israélien imagine' – a week in April curated by Akram Zaatari with Avi Mograbi at the Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers, France – transcended the double censorship of two countries at war, Lebanon and Israel, creating a temporary zone of freedom – and cleverness.

ED BUSCOMBE

Critic, UK

A Prophet (Jacques Audiard)

I Am Love (Luca Guadagnino)

The kind of Italian film they don't seem to make any more – a tale of passion set amid the narcissistic, frigid upper class, a subject that harks back to the great days of Italian cinema.

The Ghost (The Ghost Writer) (Roman

Polanski, France/Germany/UK)

A welcome return to form for Polanski, with a cunningly constructed tale of dirty deeds in high places, which irresistibly invites one to speculate on the connection with recent political events. Shot on a bleakly evocative wintry coastline, with a terrific performance by Ewan McGregor as the eponymous ghost writer, it's a film with old-fashioned, solid virtues.

White Material (Claire Denis,

France/Cameroon)

Isabelle Huppert (superb as always) is the owner of a coffee plantation in an unnamed African country, threatened with disaster by the chaos around her during a civil war. It's a disturbing film, its characters menaced by forces neither they nor we can really understand.

Another Year (Mike Leigh, UK)

See box p. 33.



=8 Film socialisme Like many friends, I'm still figuring this one out – and the effort has already been well worth the trouble. Even when Godard's pet notions are unduly solipsistic, the work (and play) with sound and image are too dazzling to ignore. **Jonathan Rosenbaum**



=8 Nostalgia for the Light In Chile's Atacama desert, astronomers examine the origins of the universe. Close to the observatory, families of the disappeared search for vestiges of their loved ones, victims of Pinochet's regime. An extraordinary film about the unknown and the unknowable. **Maria Delgado**



=8 The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu Andrei Ujica's reconfiguration of archival propaganda material, quietly needling out its intrinsic irony and the seeds of its own unravelling, is stunningly innovative in the realm of documentary. **Carmen Gray**

DAVE CALHOUN

Film editor, 'Time Out London', UK

Another Year (Mike Leigh)

Dogtooth (Yorgos Lanthimos)

Exit through the Gift Shop (Banksy, UK)

The Arbor (Clio Barnard)

The Mouth of the Wolf (La Bocca del lupo) (Pietro Marcello, Italy/France)

Highlights: A memorial screening at the Berlinale of Eric Rohmer's *Pauline à la plage*, introduced by Michel Ciment and Frédéric Mitterrand; a late-night screening of Henri-Georges Clouzot's *The Wages of Fear*, also in Berlin; Ken Loach's rousing keynote speech at the LFF; the Fellini exhibition at Paris's Jeu de Paume gallery; Andrew Köttling's 'Swandown' exhibit at the UCA campus, Farnham – a taster, hopefully, of a new film with Iain Sinclair; Ronald Harwood's talk on screenwriting at BFI Southbank; the release of Roman Polanski; the re-establishment of direct links between government and the BFI; the eating in *I Am Love*; the ecstatic lunacy of *Black Swan*; and the strange allure of a pregnant Isabelle Carré in *Le Refuge*.

TOM CHARITY

Vancity Theatre program coordinator, Canada

Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (Apichatpong Weerasethakul)

Nostalgia for the Light (Patricio Guzmán)

Carlos (Olivier Assayas)

Poetry (Lee Changdong)

Certified Copy (Abbas Kiarostami)

Highlights: In the trailer for *Tron: Legacy*, Jeff Bridges comes face to face with his own youth – not a clip from the 1982 movie (which I never saw), but the actor's digital avatar. The implications are dizzying. Maybe actresses will stop mutilating their flesh now. Maybe we won't need any new actors at all. But I bet Bridges will be more compelling acting his real age in *True Grit*.

Seeing 127 Hours after waiting two hours in line at the Toronto International Film Festival – because not all digital projectors are created equal, apparently. Maybe the wait actually improved the movie? With *Toy Story 3*, this was the best Hollywood movie of the year.

Seeing – and hearing – Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* with live accompaniment from the incomparable Alloy Orchestra – and reflecting that the child shown being brought into the world in the explicit birth scene must be over 80 now, if he survived the 20th century, and wondering if he ever saw this most modern of films. And if he did, did he recognise himself?

IAN CHRISTIE

Professor of film history, Birkbeck, UK

Mysteries of Lisbon (Mistérios de Lisboa) (Raúl Ruiz, Portugal)

How I Ended This Summer (Kakya provel etim letom) (Alexei Popogrebsky, Russia)

An elemental cat-and-mouse psychodrama set in the frozen north, by one of Russia's brightest new talents.

Robinson in Ruins (Patrick Keiller, UK)

The third instalment of Keiller's Robinsonade moves away from cities and docks to probe the English landscape with a steely yet moving intensity.

Tetro (Francis Ford Coppola, Argentina/Italy/Spain/USA)

It's crazy and uneven, to say the least, but even so a reminder of what once made Coppola so exciting as a 'movie brat' – and a wonderful reinvention from a veteran.

The Nail in the Boot (Mikhail Kalatozov, 1931, USSR)

One of this year's Pordenone Festival highlights – the banned and believed-lost early feature by Kalatozov, famous for *The Cranes Are Flying* and *I Am Cuba*. Here was the same delirious cinematography already present in a propaganda piece that pulls out all the stops to hammer home its point.

Highlights: The soundtrack of Scorsese's *Shutter Island* came as a total surprise, even to someone who'd followed the film's making. An amazing anthology of 20th-century avant-garde music accompanies Teddy's soul-searching mission, giving the paranoid imagery even greater edge and depth.

Another unexpected treat was the climax of Thierry Frémaux's Lumière presentation at the Bologna Cinema Ritrovato festival. Louis Lumière always believed film should be in colour and stereoscopic, but actually to see the 3D projection he finally achieved in the 1930s, recreated on the Piazza Maggiore giant screen, was to be reminded that 3D is hardly a recent novelty – more like how it was always meant to be.

MICHEL CIMENT

'Positif', France

The Ditch (Jiabianguo) (Wang Bing, Hong Kong/France/Belgium)

The famous documentary filmmaker (*West of the Tracks*) brings his sense of reality to depict the harrowing conditions of the life of the prisoners in this powerful rendering of the re-education camps in Mao's China.

Poetry (Lee Changdong)

Confirming the exceptional talent of the South Korean director – and the vitality of Far East cinema – *Poetry* for me deserved to win the Palme d'Or in Cannes.

Silent Souls (Ovsyanki) (Aleksii Fedorchenko, Russia)

A poetic vision of life which testifies to the new surge in Russian cinema.

Of Gods and Men (Xavier Beauvois) Recreates with warmth and gravity the fate of seven monks decapitated in an Algerian monastery.

Mysteries of Lisbon (Raúl Ruiz)

One of two great films originally produced for television this year (the other being *Carlos*), *Mysteries of Lisbon* is a masterpiece by Ruiz, shortened to four-and-a-half hours. Adapted from a 19th-century novel by Castelo Branco, it would have made Visconti jealous. A rake becoming a monk, an anguished bastard child, a tortured wife and a castrating father are the protagonists of a romantic-surrealistic melodrama shot in gorgeous colours and constantly surprising by the twists of its plot and the inventive *mise en scène*.

Highlight: A box-set of five DVDs distributed by Arte Editions brings back to life the films made in the 1960s by Pierre Etaix, a worthy heir of the slapstick tradition of Keaton and Tati.

PAM COOK

Academic, UK

The Killer inside Me (Michael Winterbottom, USA/UK/Sweden/France)

The Road (John Hillcoat, USA)

A Prophet (Jacques Audiard)

A Town Called Panic (Panique au village)

(Stéphane Aubier & Vincent Patar, Belgium/Luxembourg/France)

Tetro (Francis Ford Coppola)

2010 The Year in Review

MARK COUSINS

Filmmaker and critic, 'Prospect', UK

Film socialisme (Jean-Luc Godard)

Stupid in love, solitary, misanthropic, spitting fury. As wildly energetic as *Kick-Ass* (which I also loved and which, I thought, was a great Jewish comedy. Jean-Luc, rent it from LoveFilm).

Another Year (Mike Leigh)

Which loves people as much as Godard doesn't. Leigh's most Ozu-like film.

Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (Apichatpong Weerasethakul)

In which people split in two, in which death is a soft membrane (if only), and in which the shots are as great as the cuts in the Godard film.

Certified Copy (Abbas Kiarostami)

Juliette Binoche, you were made for movies, like Falconetti or Louise Brooks or Anna Karina.

The Illusionist (L'Illusionniste)

(Sylvain Chomet, UK/France)

My home city, Edinburgh, lifted off the ground by film.

Highlights: I spent more time making than watching films this year, and my movie memories of 2010 are all over the shop: I wore a kilt and climbed to the Hollywood sign at dusk. (It bangs as it cools.) I spent time with Stanley Donen and argued with him about his film *Two for the Road*. For months I relished the arrival of Terrence Malick's new movie *Tree of Life*, but he has kept us waiting. I cried – I know, what a jessie – at the beauty of Claudia Cardinale in *Girl with a Suitcase* (*La ragazza con la valigia*, 1961), which I saw for the first time at the Telluride Film Festival. I made a little cinema in a village in Iraq and showed films to kids – and saw my boyhood in their euphoria.

The lowlight of my movie year was the death of my friend, the film-book author John Orr, who wrote like Godard cuts.

MARIA DELGADO

Academic and critic, UK

Nostalgia for the Light (Patricio Guzmán)

See box p.27.

The Peddler (El ambulante)

(Eduardo de la Serna, Lucas Marcheggiano & Adriana Yurkovich, Argentina)

A trio of directors follow intrepid, self-taught filmmaker Daniel Burmeister as he arrives in a sleepy Argentine town and embarks on a modest genre pic with a group of locals. A wonderful, hugely entertaining documentary that juggles observations on small-town life with reflections on why film matters and how it can make a difference.

The Mosquito Net (La Mosquitera)

(Agustí Vila, Spain)

This dark, bitter tale of a bourgeois Catalan family's multiple neurosis offers a brilliant indictment of a world where children are treated like adults and adults behave like teenagers.

What I Love the Most (Lo que más quiero)

(Delfina Castagnino, Argentina)

Another small gem from Argentina that captures the shifting dynamics between two friends over a Patagonian summer with a less-is-more approach, as Castagnino's fixed camera observes what is said and what lies between the lines.

Biutiful (Alejandro González Iñárritu, Spain/Mexico)

Highlights: Talking to González Iñárritu about the mechanics of filmmaking; finding DVDs of all Martin Rejtman's majestic black comedies in Buenos Aires; watching the ghosts of Basque film

history flicker on the walls of José María de Orbe's family house in the elegiac *Father*; raising a glass to Luis Miñarro, Spain's most ambitious independent producer, who was involved in three of my favourite films of the year: *Uncle Boonmee*, *Father* and *The Mosquito Net*.

MAR DIESTRO-DÓPIDO

'Sight & Sound'

Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (Apichatpong Weerasethakul)

Nostalgia for the Light (Patricio Guzmán)

Mnemosyne (John Akomfrah)

The Arbor (Clio Barnard)

Father (Aïta) (José María de Orbe, Spain)

La vida sublime (The Life Sublime)

(Daniel V. Villamediana, Spain)

Highlight: Sharing a reindeer soup with Jonathan Rosenbaum and Andrei Khrzhanovsky, director of *A Room and a Half*, in a teepee near the Arctic, surrounded by 300 huskies howling at the sunset.

THE FERRONI BRIGADE AKA

CHRISTOPH HUBER & OLAF MÖLLER

Critics, Austria/Germany

Final Flesh (Vernon Chatman, USA)

The Ragnarök of modern comedy and the surprise find of the year: an apocalypse-themed *huis clos* so outrageously weird it reportedly left its creator dumbstruck. Imagine a mix of *South Park* at its most vulgarly surrealistic and Ferreri at his loosest and least inhibited, directed by an assortment of porno hacks and featuring dazzlingly acting-challenged talents.

Odipus Monument Test 01

(Norbert Pfaffenbichler, Austria)

Durs Grünbein liest die dritte Satire des Juvenal (Klaus Wyborny, Germany)

Two avant-garde studies for truly radical (re-)readings of Greek and Roman classics. From the construction site of a world cinema apart.

Of Gods and Men (Xavier Beauvois)

Wall Street Money Never Sleeps

(Oliver Stone, USA)

Broker and broken, world trade and family ties, cold cynicism and hot-hearted hope. This might go down as the most misunderstood Hollywood masterpiece of 2010 (followed closely by Joel Schumacher's similarly reviled

Twelve). Stone's portrait of high finance as a self-obsessed, Darwinism-keyed clique of social killer mutants merrily working away towards self-extinction was seemingly too subtle, sardonic and sinister for folks wanting a quick, clean condemnation of bankerdom – it ain't that simple.

Oca (Father) (Vlado Skafar, Slovenia)

The proletarian, low-budget, emotionally exhilarating answer to *Wall Street*: a sketch of people whose lives are destroyed by global capitalism going berserk – which, again, is like saying that *Au hasard Balthazar* tells the sad tale of a donkey's life.

Vapor Trail (Clark)

(John Gianvito, USA/Philippines)

A monument to all poor who refuse to see themselves as imperialism's collateral damage, erected in humble solidarity.

Highlight: Meeting Miguel Marías in Bologna. Truly a soulmate in cinema.

PHILIP FRENCH

'The Observer', UK

Inception (Christopher Nolan, USA/UK)

Winter's Bone (Debra Granik)

Another Year (Mike Leigh)

The Kids Are All Right

(Lisa Cholodenko, USA/France)

The Social Network (David Fincher)

Highlights: The year's great revival was the near-definitive restoration of Lang's *Metropolis* (1927). I've been watching ragged versions in uncomfortable venues since I was a teenage cinephile in the early 1950s: it's now available on DVD for home viewing. The most revealing revival was Leo McCarey's 1937 *Make Way for Tomorrow* (Eureka Blu-ray), a Depression classic that must have been Ozu's model for *Tokyo Story*.

The most illuminating film book that came my way this year was Susan Compo's *Warren Oates* (University Press of Kentucky), appropriately subtitled *A Wild Life*. It's a frank, fascinating biography of a dedicated character actor who moved in the less fashionable Hollywood circles and appeared in some of the key movies of his time.

A defining cinematic event? Our coalition government's decision to scrap the UK Film Council is, if not exactly a

tragedy, then a stupid, ill-considered decision, characteristic of the Establishment's attitude towards our cinema and our movie industry over the past 80 years, whether the aim was to curb or encourage. Harold Wilson in the 1940s, Thatcher in the 80s, Brown in the early years of this century – it's all much the same.

CHRIS FUJIWARA

Critic, USA

Condolences (Ying Liang, China)

A short built around the stubbornness of a woman's body as it stays in a chair, while all around her an official ceremony of forgetting is taking place. Across the duration of this unflinching image, tragedy and irony trade off, neither one willing to abandon the field to the other, and neither able to assert clear title to it.

Rosalinda (Matías Piñeiro, Argentina)

This short revitalises a kind of dialogue with theatre that cinema used to engage in more frequently (sometimes with the brilliance of *To Be or Not to Be*). Taking as its starting point a series of rehearsals of *As You Like It*, it's one of the most interesting Shakespeare films to emerge since the death of Orson Welles.

O Estranho Caso de Angélica (The Strange Case of Angelica) (Manoel de Oliveira, Portugal/Spain/France/Brazil)

Toujours moins (Luc Moulet, France)

Studying the recent history of the replacement of human workers by automation, *Toujours moins* is a film of supreme elegance and wit.

Festival (Jean-Claude Rousseau, France)

GRAHAM FULLER

Critic, USA

Carlos (Olivier Assayas)

See box p.33.

Father of My Children (Le Père de mes enfants) (Mia Hansen-Løve, France/Germany)

Hansen-Løve explored "the cruelty of cinema" in her second feature, which claims as its martyr-victim an urbane producer of risky arthouse ventures. The scene in which his grieving family moves from darkness to light during a power cut is a sublime metaphor for carrying on.

Meek's Cutoff (Kelly Reichardt, USA)

A 'slow cinema' first for the genre, Reichardt's revisionist-feminist western reveals how pioneer families went astray on a waterless branch of the Oregon Trail in 1845. Starkly poetic, it punctures both the racist masculine aggression of Manifest Destiny and Fordian nostalgia.

Revanche (Götz Spielmann, Austria)

This impressive anti-thriller morphs from sleazy *noir* to serene Christian parable as it follows a bank robber from Vienna to the countryside and leads him from revenge to redemption.

The Social Network (David Fincher)

Highlights: Watching Claude Lanzmann's Holocaust documentary *Shoah* on its 25th anniversary rerelease in New York put everything else I saw into perspective. Who can comprehend the backwards look of the train driver at his ghostly cargo, the throat-slitting gestures of warning to the trapped Jews, the horror of the song taught to new arrivals at Treblinka?

Elsewhere, it was a banner year for Powell (*Black Narcissus* DVD, *Peeping Tom* revived), Lang (*Dr Mabuse* and M DVDs, *Metropolis* restored), Hitchcock-as-icton (*Double Take*) and Clouzot (*Inferno*).



8 Poetry The title tells all, evoking both the story (a woman takes to writing verse as her grandson is implicated in a girl's suicide) and tone of Lee Changdong's exquisite film. Seamlessly conjoining many themes, it benefits from one of the year's best performances, from Yun Junghee. Geoff Andrew

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2010 The Year in Review



6 I Am Love (Io sono l'amore)

Luca Guadagnino's Tilda Swinton vehicle is the best portrait of crumbling aristocracy since Luchino Visconti's 'The Leopard' – and also has a delirious homage to D.H. Lawrence as the cherry on the cake. **Naman Ramachandran**



6 Winter's Bone Not least because of Jennifer Lawrence's riveting lead performance, this was one of the best quest movies I've seen in years, its dark fairytale tests all the more compelling because they are faced by a 17-year-old girl in a dirtily real Ozark mountains setting. **Lee Marshall**

CHARLES GANT

'Heat' magazine, UK

The Social Network (David Fincher)

Toy Story 3 (Lee Unkrich, USA)

Catfish (Henry Joost & Ariel Schulman, USA)

Emotional rollercoaster rides from opposite ends of the budgetary scale: the latter documentary seems so outrageously exploitative, the only explanation could be that it was in fact scripted drama. Film-makers Joost and Schulman push us to the edge of outrage, then pull back in the nick of time.

Tabloid (Errol Morris, USA)

More straightforwardly enjoyable than *Catfish* – though also exploitative of its deluded subject.

Monsters (Gareth Edwards, UK)

For surprising us with its collision of road movie, romance and sci-fi.

Highlight: I first saw *The Social Network* at a London press screening, but a couple of weeks later I was in New York the day it opened. Seeing it again on opening night, at a packed megaplex on 42nd Street – right film, right place, right time.

LEONARDO GARCIA-TSAO

Critic, Mexico

Carlos (Olivier Assayas)

Chicogrande (Felipe Cazals, Mexico)

An inner epic and a lucid critique of US interventionism, done in the form of a classic western. Even the genre themes of loyalty and camaraderie are there.

My Joy (Schastye Moye) (Sergei Loznitsa, Ukraine/Germany/Netherlands)

An unpredictable road movie into Russian darkness, past or present. One of the few true revelations of the year.

Shutter Island (Martin Scorsese, USA)

Against most expectations, Scorsese regained his mojo in this nightmarish recreation of his protagonist's mind.

Toy Story 3 (Lee Unkrich)

Highlights: 2010 for me was the year I finally had my fill of the shabby minimalist trend which, after a ten-year run, has become in its own way as formulaic, convention-ridden and self-indulgent as any mainstream movie. So allow me to make a pitch for maximalism. Go for baroque, guys! Don't let the legacies of Von Sternberg or Welles be forgotten.

CHARLOTTE GARSON

'Cahiers du cinéma', France

Vénus noire (Black Venus) (Abdellatif Kechiche, France/Italy/Belgium)

La Vie au Ranch (Chicks)

(Sophie Letourneur, France)

Post Mortem (Pablo Larraín, Chile/Germany/Mexico)

The Social Network (David Fincher)

Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (Apichatpong Weerasethakul)

Highlights: David D. Williams is a painter and cinéaste who teaches film at the University of Virginia. His two masterpieces, *Lillian* (1993) and *Thirteen* (1997), are included on a French-release box-set that gives us the opportunity to witness the synthesis of three aesthetics – experimental, documentary, fictional – in two piercingly beautiful female portraits. In giving barely fictionalised roles to his black neighbours and using his own home as set, Williams gives new meaning to the expression 'home movie'. Despite his selection at Sundance at the start of the 1990s, his lyricism – carried by the muted colours of 16mm – never set a trend. But he remains, with Charles Burnett, the most beautiful example of American 'folk cinema'.

Plus *Mad Men*: the best song heard in a movie in a long time – the autobiographical lament sung by artist/madman Jean-Marie in Antoine Boutet's French documentary *Le Plein pays*; Jean Narboni's stimulating little book on *The Great Dictator* – *Pourquoi les coiffeurs?* *Notes actuelles sur Le Dictateur*; Edward Yang's restored *A Brighter Summer Day*.

RYAN GILBEY

'New Statesman', UK

The Social Network (David Fincher)

See box p.36.

Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (Apichatpong Weerasethakul)

Apichatpong uses film language we've encountered before, but assembles it in such a way that we have the sensation of stumbling upon a previously undiscovered and uncorrupted tongue.

The Headless Woman (La mujer sin cabeza) (Lucrecia Martel, Argentina/Spain/France/Italy)

In a delicious reflection of the main character's central conundrum – what

did I do? – the audience is left asking, over and over, "What did we see?" Like Lynch or Antonioni, it's a mystery with an infinite shelf life.

Greenberg (Noah Baumbach, USA)

In common with *The Social Network*, this is also a comedy (of sorts) about an East Coast Jew hitting California without the benefit of any discernible social skills. Here's an arbitrary measure of this haunting movie's success: even Rhys Ifans is good in it.

Gentlemen Broncos (Jared Hess, USA)

The Peddler (Eduardo de la Serna, Lucas

Marcheggiano & Adriana Yurcovich)

I'm cheating by smuggling two films into fifth place, but these are snug bedfellows, both of them in love with the DIY ethic and the unruly joy of imaginative storytelling.

JANE GILES

Head of content, BFI

Enter the Void (Gaspar Noé)

Blinking marvellous, with one of the best-ever opening credit sequences. Totally immersive cinema.

A Prophet (Jacques Audiard)

The Runaways (Floria Sigismondi, USA)

Criminally underseen, it barely scratched the box office, but this gorgeous 1970s romp should be on the syllabus at the Girls' Own School of Rock 'n' Roll Film Studies.

My Son, My Son, What Have Ye Done (Werner Herzog, USA/Germany)

My expectations for *The Bad Lieutenant* were raised too high to deliver, but this cheered me up no end with its dream cast and flamingo hostages.

I Am Love (Luca Guadagnino)

Highlights: Watching Peckinpah's

The Getaway in NFT1 as part of the Steve McQueen season – it surely trumps *The Killer inside Me* in the Jim Thompson adaptation stakes.

Judging the EIFF award for Best British short film and being worried for days by *In the Meadow* (directed by Dave Alexander Smith) – Marcel Marceau meets Michael Haneke.

Being moved to tears by John Krish's description of filming *They Took Us to the Sea*, which screened on the opening night of the BFI's 'Boom Britain' post-war documentary season.

Realising that the world wouldn't end with the death of Dennis Hopper.

CARMEN GRAY

Critic, UK

Aurora (Cristi Puiu)

The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu (Andrei Ujica)

While the cinema of the moment may have shifted to Thailand, for me the year was still all about Romania. My experience of these two films was heightened by seeing them with a packed and responsive local audience at the excellent Transilvania International Film Festival in Cluj. Puiu's bleak, blackly absurdist meditation on the human will to kill is nothing short of a medium-pushing masterpiece, while Ujica's reconfiguration of archival propaganda material is just as stunningly innovative in the realm of documentary.

Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (Apichatpong Weerasethakul)

Trash Humpers (Harmony Korine, USA/UK)

How to Make a Book with Steidl (Jörg

Adolph & Gereon Wetzel, Germany) Brilliantly witty, unique documentary about German publisher Gerhard Steidl.

Highlight: The resurrection of the extended *Metropolis*, also screened in Cluj, with live music.

NICK HASTED

Critic, UK

The Road (John Hillcoat)

A Prophet (Jacques Audiard)

Oil City Confidential (Julien Temple, UK)

Capitalism: A Love Story (Michael Moore, USA)

Agora (Alejandro Amenábar, Spain)

Highlights: My most unpleasant surprise in the cinema was watching the fatal beating of Jessica Alba's character in *The Killer inside Me*, Michael Winterbottom's scrupulously well-intentioned, awful moral and tonal misjudgement. The happiest was De Niro in *Everybody's Fine*, finally playing the convincing ordinary man he'd said he was aiming for in 1970s interviews. A great actor's unremarked return, it was more magically nuanced and personal than any fiction Scorsese's managed lately.

NICK JAMES

'Sight & Sound'

The Social Network (David Fincher)**Aurora** (Cristi Puiu)

This quotidian portrait of a man contemplating violence builds in your mind even after you've devoted three hours to watching it. Cinema's own *Crime and Punishment*.

Over Your Cities Grass Will Grow

(Sophie Fiennes, France/Netherlands/UK)

This uncompromising documentary about artist Anselm Kiefer's landscaping of a studio site in Barjac in the South of France made an awe-inspiring pleasure of the artist's aesthetic rigour.

Mysteries of Lisbon (Raúl Ruiz)**Le quattro volte** (Four Times)

(Michelangelo Frammartino, Italy/Germany/Switzerland)

Few films feel as completely achieved as this adroitly staged meditation on life cycles in rural Italy.

Highlights: Standing briefly outside the bounds of journalistic propriety, my absolute highlight of 2010 was watching (on television) my wife Kate Ogborn win a television Bafta for Best Single Drama as the producer of Samantha Morton's excellent film *The Unloved*. On a more professional level, talking about the cinema of the last decade with a roomful of Hungarian film-makers and cinephiles at the delightfully modest Titanic Film Festival in Budapest was another high point, even if the Icelandic ash cloud did mean I had to come home on a bus that took 27 hours to reach London.

I got a kick out of the 'slow cinema' debate we at *S&S* initiated, though a look at these poll results will show there was a deal of devil's advocate about our questioning of its dominance. It was a great pleasure to present *Uncle Boonmee* as the *S&S* screening at the LFF. It would be in my top five if not for my wanting to give *Le quattro volte* a boost after noting that most of my team colleagues had voted for *Boonmee*.

The maddest moment was hearing about the abolition of the UK Film Council while queueing for the videotheque at the Sarajevo Film Festival. The best news would include Clio Barnard's double prize win at the LFF awards for *The Arbor* – and the completion of finance for Terence Davies's first drama film for over a decade, *The Deep Blue Sea*.

DAVID JENKINS

'Time Out London', UK

La Danse: The Paris Opera Ballet

(Frederick Wiseman, France/USA) Wiseman employs his primitive, humanist observational mode to present dance as an abstract form of communication. A master on top form.

Alle Anderen (Everyone Else)

(Maren Ade, Germany)

A 'slow death of love' movie every bit as nuanced and blissfully maddening as *Scenes from a Marriage*.

The Illusionist (Sylvain Chomet)**The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu** (Andrei Ujica)**Meek's Cutoff** (Kelly Reichardt)

One of America's finest working directors delivers a deliciously opaque range western with philosophical undertones by the wagonload.

Highlights: Seeing Mizoguchi's 1933 silent *The Water Magician* with *benshi* narration and live koto score at the Barbican added a novel new dimension

to the cinemagoing experience. Jafar Panahi's poignant ode to the necessity of creative freedom, *The Accordion* – made before his imprisonment – played at Venice to a lengthy standing ovation. Also, the Lubitsch retrospective at Locarno reminded me what a sublime, mischievous talent he was. I was particularly smitten by the midnight screening of *The Shop Around the Corner*. Best DVD release: Fassbinder's *World on a Wire* (1973).

KENT JONES

Critic, US

Carlos (Olivier Assayas)**The Social Network** (David Fincher)

Earlier this year, Olivier Assayas and I did a talk at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. He'd been asked to discuss a film he admired, and he chose *Zodiac*. Early on, he said he was struck more than ever by the way that Fincher's film found its structural and dramatic inspiration in reality itself. This is a hallmark of *Carlos* and *The Social Network* and of the three other films listed below – each in its own unique way.

The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu (Andrei Ujica)**Boxing Gym** (Frederick Wiseman, USA)**Film socialisme** (Jean-Luc Godard)

Highlights: For me, the great filmgoing event of this past year was Bruce Goldstein's 3D festival at Film Forum in New York. Apart from *Dial 'M' for Murder*, which I've seen many times before, the highlight of the series was *Inferno* (1953), directed by the recently deceased Roy Ward Baker. It crosscuts systematically between Robert Ryan, a wealthy businessman left alone in the mountains with a broken leg, and his wife (Rhonda Fleming) and her lover (William Lundigan) enjoying the pleasures of a swim, a well-cooked meal and a bottle of wine in air-conditioned comfort. The 3D accentuates rock formations, cacti, taut lengths of rope, Robert Ryan's big, long body edging one crag at a time down to the desert floor and on towards civilisation. A tough, spare movie, a little grandiose but exciting, it doesn't take any shortcuts getting Ryan off the mountain.

Best acting of the year, hands down – Ruth Sheen's staggering performance in *Another Year*. I was hanging on every gesture, just as I was 22 years ago when I saw *High Hopes*.

EDWARD LAWRENSON

'The Big Issue', UK

Aurora (Cristi Puiu)**Enter the Void** (Gaspar Noé)**The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu** (Andrei Ujica)**Nostalgia for the Light** (Patricio Guzmán)**Mama** (Yelena & Nikolai Renard, Russia)**MARK LE FANU**

Academic and critic, UK

If I Want to Whistle, I Whistle (Eu cand vreau sa fluier, fluier) (Florin Serban, Romania/Sweden)

A magnificent prison-and-hostage drama. Being Romanian, the film takes its time to unfold. Its mastery of *mise en scène* is one thing; its wisdom and humanity are even more impressive.

Medeni mesec (Honeymoons)

(Goran Paskaljevic, Serbia/Albania)

Paskaljevic is one of the great European directors. *Honeymoons*, his latest, shows all his characteristic sensuousness and pessimism – one of the best films in recent history about the movement of people across boundaries.

Na putu (On the Path)

(Jasmila Zbanic, Bosnia & Herzegovina/Austria/Germany/Croatia)

Its subject couldn't be more topical: the lure of Islam in the face of contemporary Western secularism. How delicately and bravely the director handles the matter. No cheating, no clichés: the film is dialectically intelligent and psychologically penetrating.

My Queen Karo (Dorothee Van Den Bergh, Netherlands/Belgium)

A libertarian commune in Amsterdam during the 1970s is viewed through the eyes of a child who 'suffers' the experience morally, in the depths of her little soul. But what an incredible child – and what an extraordinarily conceived set-up. The energy, colour and inventiveness of the playing lift this movie to a very high level.

Ajami (Scandar Copti & Yaron Shani, Germany/Israel)

The best of the crop of excellent Israeli films that have been hitting our screens this year. I preferred it to *Lebanon* (good in a different way). It does a difficult thing, consummately, by seriously addressing both sides of the most intractable conflict of our time.

Highlights: For me this was the screening at Pordenone's Giornate del Cinema

Muto of a freshly rediscovered John Ford movie, *Upstream* (1927). It's not every day such films turn up, and in such wonderful condition too. A comedy set in theatrical digs, it strikes one as perfect of its kind – a vintage work from one of cinema's old masters.

I've been following the discussion in the pages of *S&S* about 'slow cinema'. Part of me doesn't need to be convinced: in order to say anything interesting, one needs to have the space, and the time, to do it in. And this is best guaranteed (other things being equal) by the kind of long-take cinema which anchors you in the presence of the actors – and keeps you there over a measurable period of time. On the other hand, there are no absolute formulas, and intensity of expression can come in many guises: it can also be swift, brutal, staccato. The key matter is integrity, and having something to say worth listening to.

COLIN MACCABE

Academic & critic, UK

Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (Apichatpong Weerasethakul)**Of Gods and Men** (Xavier Beauvois)**Tamara Drewe** (Stephen Frears, UK)**I Am Love** (Luca Guadagnino)**Carlos** (Olivier Assayas)

Highlight: The screening of a restored print of Visconti's *The Leopard* (1963) at Cannes. The film was once again superb, but the meditation on time passing was given several extra turns of the screw by its presentation by the only two members of cast and crew still living: Alain Delon, startlingly beautiful as he approaches 80, and Claudia Cardinale, dissolving into giggles like a young girl.

LEE MARSHALL

Critic, Italy

Le quattro volte (Michelangelo Frammartino)

The films that move and interest me, at least outside the documentary format, are increasingly ones that channel the otherworldly quality of the cinematic experience. This was one: a laconic, sceptical, almost silent film about a dying shepherd, a lamb, a dog, a tree and a steaming mound of charcoal, it dramatised the natural circle of life and death without recourse to cute lion cubs or talking meerkats.

Silent Souls (Aleksandr Sokolov)

One of those rare films that takes the world we live in and makes it strange and new. With its blend of invented folk traditions, free-floating symbols and sympathy for people and places on the margins, it reminded me of a Borges short story. Not drama, not mockumentary, definitely not realism, it seemed to inhabit a whole new genre.

Winter's Bone (Debra Granik)

See box p. 30.

The Illusionist (Sylvain Chomet)

Chomet's film has meticulously observed rural Scottish and Edinburgh locations, but the fact that it's animation once again makes the familiar strange, adding another layer to a poignant tale of illusions, both of the conjuring and of the human variety.

Attenberg (Athina Rachel Tsangari, Greece)

While I recognised the fashionably quirky nature of Tsangari's Venice competition entry, I also surrendered completely to its oddball portrait of intense father-daughter relationships and small-town life and friendships.



THE LEOPARD: "presented at Cannes by the only two cast members still living"

BUTTERFLY POSTERS AND DESIGNS (O)

2010 The Year in Review

ADRIAN MARTIN

Academic and critic, Australia

Certified Copy (Abbas Kiarostami)

Film socialisme (Jean-Luc Godard)

Poetry (Lee Changdong)

Vincere (Marco Bellocchio, Italy/France)

Wild Grass (Les herbes folles)

(Alain Resnais, France/Italy)

Highlights: It actually snuck in at the very end of 2009: the special screening of two 35mm films by Carmelo Bene, *Our Lady of the Turks* (1968) and *Salomé* (1972), at the Thessaloniki Film Festival. They were made under impossible conditions, through the sheer force of Bene's considerable artistic will, during the seven-year period in which he devoted himself to cinema and more or less abandoned the theatrical experiments he had pursued since the late 1950s, and to which he returned until the end of his life in 2002. All the dazed cinephiles who stumbled out of these big, loud screenings grasped for the predictable comparisons: Fellini, Welles, Anger, Jarman, Schroeter, Pasolini, Kubrick, Ruiz, Jack Smith, João César Monteiro... But no combination of the known reference points will suffice. Bene is utterly unique. As both performer and director, he pulverised language, revelled in what he called the "surgical imprecision of montage", casually scandalised every standard of conventional morality and lit a bonfire of the classical traditions which he nonetheless knew and respected deeply. Bene is an avant-garde superstar in parts of Europe, but is virtually unknown in any English-speaking film culture. Cinema history still hides its finest gems.

SOPHIE MAYER

Academic, UK

This Quality (Rosalind Nashashibi, Egypt)

This mysterious, engaging, thoughtful work repays repeated viewings as a film about the act (and art) of looking. Apparently simple, the complex moment of looking at a woman in public space takes on resonance when followed by shots of draped cars in Cairo's streets.

Budrus (Julia Bacha, Israel/Occupied

Palestinian Territory/USA) Rough around the edges cinematically but incredibly thoughtful in its editing and iconography – and utterly necessary in its representation of non-violent resistance to the Israeli occupation.

Double Tide (Sharon Lockhart,

USA/Austria)

Cinema as stillness, as labour and as meditation – like a cool glass of water in the middle of the hectic LFF.

Working Girls (Dorothy Arzner, 1931, USA)

Arzner's 'lost' film screened as part of a deeply enjoyable retrospective at the London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival. It's a fast-talking and more liberated precursor of screwball comedy, but harder-edged (despite its sentimental ending) in its intimations of single motherhood and prostitution.

Highlights: The Agnès Varda season at the BFI and on MUBI – for the opportunity it gave to mingle and compare Varda's elegantly quirky body of features with her lesser-known documentaries and shorts, *Mur murs* (1980) being a stand-out.

HENRY K. MILLER

Academic, UK

The Social Network (David Fincher)

Carlos (Olivier Assayas)



A BRIGHTER SUMMER DAY: "Edward Yang's neglected magnum opus"

Scott Pilgrim vs. the World

(Edgar Wright, USA/UK/Canada)

Greenberg (Noah Baumbach)

Exit through the Gift Shop (Banksy)

Highlights: Frank Kermode, who died in August, wrote very little on film, but his extensive work on, and defence of, the canon is especially pertinent at this time of year. The terrible proliferation of lists – not exactly thin on the ground through the rest of the film calendar – might lead you to dismiss it, and the seeming availability of nearly everything might make it seem irrelevant, but the canon is more than a top ten. It's a conversation, in part, and as Kermode says in *History and Value*, it's finally inescapable. "If we want the monuments, the documents we value, we must preserve them in spite of their evil associations, and find ways of showing that their value somehow persists in our changing world."

That seeming availability of nearly everything is, of course, just that, but there are still more superb DVD releases in a year than I can absorb (or afford). The Lux's *John Latham Films 1960-1971* is beautifully put together. I was also very glad to see three of Thorold Dickinson's films – *The Queen of Spades* (1949) and *Secret People* (1951) in particular – put out by Optimum. Dickinson came into the film business as an apprentice of the director George Pearson; Judith McLaren's reconstruction of Pearson's *Ultus* quartet (1915-17), presented at BFI Southbank, was an exemplary work of scholarship, drawing on multiple archives to bring to light something unseen since its release in the age before repertory film culture.

LISA MULLEN

Critic, UK

Over Your Cities Grass Will Grow

(Sophie Fiennes)

A ravishingly hypnotic record of the work of landscape artist Anselm Kiefer, who carves haunted spaces out of earth, air, fire and water and fills them with troubling and enigmatic objects. Addressing, almost wordlessly, the interdependence of work and practice, Fiennes finally appropriates Kiefer's conceptual wonderland to ponder the relationships between film, art and truth. **Black Swan** (Darren Aronofsky, USA) Searingly intense gothic melodrama

with Natalie Portman giving the performance of her life as a virginal ballerina desperate to get in touch with her dark side. Exhilarating and exhausting: not since Powell and Pressburger has the world of ballet looked this blood-pounding visceral on screen.

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo (Män

som hatar kvinnor) (Niels Arden Oplev,

Sweden/Denmark/Germany/Norway)

The definitive film adaptation of Stieg Larsson's first and best book, with Noomi Rapace bringing unexpected vulnerability to punk hacker Lisbeth Salander. The Swedish title, which translates as "men who hate women", tells you everything you need to know about its violent plot, but the chill winds of time and regret also blow through its snowscapes, to brilliantly atmospheric effect.

Predators (Nimród Antal, USA)

Producer Robert Rodriguez has his fingerprints all over this devastatingly efficient splatterfest, which strips the man-hunting-alien concept back to its cold-hearted genre essentials by parachuting a mixed bag of flawed humans on to the suffocating jungle planet that the predators call home.

Capitalism: A Love Story (Michael Moore)

The exasperated outburst of a tattered revolutionary, Moore's latest diatribe lacks the nimbleness of the director's key works, but still packs political punch. He may not quite bring himself to say the word 'socialism' out loud, but at least he's brought the obscenity of 'dead peasant insurance' to the public's attention.

Highlight: *Went the Day Well?* (1942), Alberto Cavalcanti's unsettling propaganda piece about a sleepy village invaded by Nazis in disguise, returned to the big screen this summer to unnerve a new generation with its subversive take on the English rural idyll.

KIM NEWMAN

Critic, UK

The Social Network (David Fincher)

Another Year (Mike Leigh)

Metropolis (Fritz Lang, 1927, restored)

The Secret in Their Eyes (El secreto de

sus ojos) (Juan José Campanella,

Spain/Argentina)

The Bad Lieutenant Part of Call:

New Orleans (Werner Herzog, USA)

HANNAH PATTERSON

Critic, UK

Shed Your Tears and Walk Away

(Jez Lewis, UK)

Meek's Cutoff (Kelly Reichardt)

The Arbor (Clio Barnard)

Winter's Bone (Debra Granik)

A Prophet (Jacques Audiard)

Highlights: Alan Bennett discussing his life and work at BFI Southbank; the Branchage International Jersey Film Festival, for its intimate and imaginative one-off events staged in unusual local settings; a host of illuminating documentaries and Q&As at Sheffield Doc/Fest (in particular, *Marwencol* and *Battle for Barking*).

Sloping off alone to watch *Streetdance 3D* in a morning screening (dance movies, a guilty pleasure) and finding three others in the audience – all teenage boys – who proceeded to dance in the aisle throughout; *Man of Aran* at Union Chapel with live soundtrack by British Sea Power; bizarrely complementary double bills of *Wall Street Money Never Sleeps* and *The Social Network*, and *Precious* and *Mugabe and the White African*.

The anticipation of seeing Joanna Hogg's new film *Archipelago* at the London Film Festival, and being unexpectedly moved by *It's Kind of a Funny Story*.

NAMAN RAMACHANDRAN

Critic, UK/India

I Am Love (Luca Guadagnino) See box p. 30.

Kray (The Edge) (Alekséi Uchitel, Russia)

An old-fashioned action film – a must for anyone with a love of steam engines.

Detective Dee and the Mystery of Phantom Flame (Di Renjie zhi Tongtong dian) (Tsui Hark, Hong Kong)

Guy Ritchie should watch and learn from this majestic period detective film before desecrating Holmes again.

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo

(Niels Arden Oplev)

Endhiran (The Robot) (S. Shankar, India)

It's a riotous clash between man and machine in India's most expensive film and highest-ever grosser, featuring the country's biggest star Rajinikanth as a scientist, a good robot and an evil robot.

Highlight: Meeting and getting an insight into the mind of Dibakar Banerjee, whose *LSD: Love Sex aur Dhokha* (Love, Sex and Deceit) opened the London Indian Film Festival. The film is based on the concept of found footage, the entire narrative seen through a voyeuristic video camera, security camera or spy cam. Made for just £140,000, it grossed ten times that and flew high in the face of bloated Bollywood disasters. It also featured one of India's first explicit sex scenes, which was censored there but shown uncut in the UK at festival screenings. In his next film *Shanghai*, it will be interesting to see how differently Banerjee treats Vassilis Vassilikos's novel *Z*, so memorably adapted by Costa-Gavras in 1968.

TONY RAYNS

Critic, UK

End of Animal (Jimseung ui Kkut)

(Jo Seung-hee, South Korea)

The Home of Stars (Byeoldeul ui

Kohyang) (Jung Yoon-suk, South Korea)

I Wish I Knew (Hai Shang Chuanqi)

(Jia Zhangke, China)

The Social Network (David Fincher)

Thomas Mao (Xiao Dongxi)

(Zhu Wen, China)

Highlights: 2010's clear highlight was the awarding of the Cannes Palme d'Or to *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives*, one of several titles that should really be in my top five – and would be, if I hadn't preferred to use some of the slots for as-yet-unrecognised films.

Apichatpong Weerasethakul has been on a whirlwind tour of festivals ever since May, and his film has already opened in several countries, not very successfully in Germany and Italy, but gratifyingly strongly elsewhere. Its triumph on the Riviera prompted a remarkable polemic from the Canadian critic Mark Peranson in his magazine *Cinema Scope*, positing an unbridgeable divide between "us" (Apichatpong fans, and those in favour of intelligent, non-industrial and innovative cinema in general) and "them" (fans of Mike Leigh, Mikhailov, Iñárritu et al). This was the most enjoyable piece of writing on cinema I read all year.

The other films that got my pulses racing in 2010 would all go down well with Peranson's "us". Most of them were from East Asia. They include Li Hongqi's deadpan tragi-comedy *Winter Vacation*, the extended cut of Zhao Liang's *Petition*, Lee Sam-Chil's very witty riff on Kafka's *Metamorphosis* and Japanese maverick Hirabayashi Isamu's two latest shorts: *Aramaki* (on an attempt to aestheticise a suicide organically) and *Shikasha* (on a mysterious race against time), shown in competition in Berlin and Cannes respectively. But I also liked some American indies: *Foreign Parts* by Verena Paravel and J.P. Sniadecki, about a scrapyard in the shadow of the New York Mets' stadium, and *Aardvark* by Kitao Sakurai, a docudrama about a blind, middle-aged ex-alcoholic and his improbable friendship with a young black jiu-jitsu instructor who moonlights as an S&M rentboy.

TIM ROBEY

'The Daily Telegraph', UK

Dogtooth (Yorgos Lanthimos)

For bite, formal audacity and hideous implications, there was nothing to match this.

I Am Love (Luca Guadagnino)

Poetry (Lee Changdong)

Forget the so-so noises out of Cannes – it's magisterial on empathy and memory.

A Town Called Panic

(Stéphane Aubier & Vincent Patar)

Hilariously off the wall, this animation blissfully refuses to settle down plotwise.

The Illusionist (Sylvain Chomet)

Highlights: The unsung hero of this year's London Film Festival was Columbia restoration expert Grover Crisp, whose team's glistening clean-up jobs on *Picnic* (1955) and *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957) provided the lushest widescreen experiences I've had all year.

In the same festival, which was in general better than ever, the restoration of Edward Yang's street-gang epic *A Brighter Summer Day* by Scorsese's World Cinema Foundation finally brought this neglected magnum opus – which for me just clips the bar of masterpiece – back to light in the full cut Yang originally approved. Back in February, a first encounter with Bill Douglas's astonishing trilogy (*My Childhood*, *My Ain Folk*, *My Way Home*, 1972-78) was the highlight of my Berlin. With their sullen soul and everyday lyricism, his films live up to their reputation – and then some.

NICK RODDICK

Critic, UK

9:06 (Igor Sterk, Slovenia/Germany)

An existential thriller inexplicably ignored by the festival circuit, about a cop coming apart at the seams as he investigates a suicide.

The Bad Lieutenant Port of Call:

New Orleans (Werner Herzog)

Having interviewed Abel Ferrara about the idea of a remake – "may they rot in hell" was his fond wish for those involved – I was supremely sceptical about Herzog's version. But not since *Fitzcarraldo* has he produced so magnificently loopy a film, shaping the world to his own vision and redeeming Nicolas Cage in the process (and that's saying something).

Over Your Cities Grass Will Grow

(Sophie Fiennes)

Tender Son: The Frankenstein Project

(Szelid teremtés: A Frankenstein-terv)

(Kornél Mundruczó,

Hungary/Germany/Austria)

Over the summer I met at least one other person who thought this was the best film shown at Cannes this year. Kornél Mundruczó has a unique – and uniquely bleak – world view, and his reimagining of the monster is both closer to Mary Shelley's original than most versions and a visually and conceptually stunning film in its own right. The rest of the world should eventually come round.

Monsters (Gareth Edwards)

Edwards barely sets a foot wrong in this road movie-cum-love story-cum-sci-fi thriller. It's not just the effects he achieves on a tiny budget – it's that the experience of what those effects represent to the people in the film is engaging and finally very moving.

Highlights: Two very different memories to cherish. First, Alec Baldwin's impish plus-size performance in the otherwise rather dreary *It's Complicated*. His bedroom scene with a laptop webcam more than makes up for Meryl Streep's strident and simpering presence in other parts of the film, not to mention its snobbish homage to luxury lifestyles.

Second, the unforgettable experience of seeing Andrei Ujica's extraordinary commentary and caption-free

The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu, not in Cannes or London, but with a packed-to-the-rafters Romanian audience in the Cinema Republica in Cluj, a Stalinist palace of culture built in Ceausescu's heyday. Watching the film was like experiencing a national catharsis, complete with laughter and tears. The Republica, I hear, is due to be 'redeveloped', which probably means turned into a retail experience.

JONATHAN ROMNEY

'The Independent on Sunday', UK

My Joy (Sergei Loznitsa)

The most overlooked film in the Cannes competition, and still apparently without a distributor in Britain. A troubling black-comic weaving of narratives set on the back roads of Russia, like Gogol put through an ethno-documentary filter.

Le quattro volte

(Michelangelo Frammartino)

Post Mortem (Pablo Larraín)

Larraín's absurdist take on the Pinochet coup proved more troubling and stirred more debate than any other film in Venice. It more than confirms the perverse promise of *Tony Manera*.



5 The Arbor A brilliantly inventive escape from the dead end of British social realism, Clio Barnard's film tells the tragic story of Northern playwright Andrea Dunbar and her children. Fortuitously, alas, it has also turned out to be the first real British film of the Cameron era. **Jonathan Romney**



4 Carlos Olivier Assayas skipped the psychology of terrorism in favour of depicting the Marxist assassin-hijacker as the star of his own 21-year action movie – a man whose need for sex and liposuction confounds the notion of revolutionary asceticism. **Graham Fuller**



3 Another Year The latest of Mike Leigh's studies of happiness and the lack of it. Generous yet not indulgent to its characters, it's a film during which one can find oneself changing one's mind about which characters are most to be pitied and most to be admired. **Ed Buscombe**

2010 The Year in Review

◀ Potiche (François Ozon, France)

I lost my taste for camp some time ago (probably around the time of Ozon's *8 Women*), but this reworking of a 1970s stage farce was probably the most enjoyable mainstream film of the year.

The Arbor (Clio Barnard) See box p.33.

Highlights: Casey Affleck's solo press conference for *I'm Still Here* in Venice, when he proved a master poker player, keeping everyone guessing about the Joaquin Phoenix 'documentary'.

Christian Marclay's astounding installation *The Clock* at White Cube Mason's Yard: an assemblage of film clips containing specific time references which actually functions as a clock.

A witty essay on time and the ways we experience it on screen, *The Clock* was mesmerising – one of the great experiments with screen duration (and a hell of a lot funnier than *Empire State*).

Worst film: Alejandro Gonzalez Inárritu's *Biutiful* – the absolute nadir of the pious, leaden current wave of international 'state of the world' movies.

JONATHAN ROSENBAUM

Critic, USA

Certified Copy (Abbas Kiarostami)

Kiarostami's much-improved remake of his first (and weakest) fiction feature – *Report* (1977), about the break-up of his own marriage – has its share of linguistic and touristic irritations, along with many thoughtful and beautiful moments. It seems like a necessary first step for a filmmaker who can't expect to go on making films in Iran.

Film socialisme (Jean-Luc Godard)

See box p.27.

The Forgotten Space

(Allan Sekula & Noël Burch, Netherlands)

I feel a special affinity for films that heroically attempt to say and do 'everything', even when they (inevitably) fail. The most obvious example is Jia Zhangke's *I Wish I Knew*. But it seems more useful to cite this much less known essay film by Sekula and Burch about sea cargo, which has taught me even more.

The Social Network (David Fincher)

I'm suspicious of instant classics, even when I'm immensely entertained by them, and I suspect that an important part of the popularity of this bittersweet Fincher-Sorkin comedy is its facile, cynically jaded fatalism about the corruptions of big business – a backhanded celebration, as in *Citizen Kane* and the first two *Godfather* films.

Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (Apichatpong Weerasethakul)

See box p.36.

SUKHDEV SANDHU

'The Daily Telegraph', UK

The Clock (Christian Marclay, UK)

It seems like it has to be a gimmick, a one-liner at best. Marclay, better known as a sound artist, has created a 24-hour film that excerpts and re-edits thousands of existing films in which a wristwatch or clock is shown telling the time. The results are extraordinary: mysterious, funny, strangely moving. It's a dazzlingly constructed reinvention of the city-symphony film that also proposes a completely new way of seeing cinema.

Voodoo Science Park (Steve Beard & Victoria Halford, UK)

For a while now left-field British directors have been moving in the direction of the art gallery; perhaps, with the publishing industry in a state

of ongoing retrenchment, left-field British writers will gravitate towards the cine-essay as a more productive home for their critical imaginations. Here maverick theorist Steve Beard, working with Victoria Halford, fashions a fascinating, Keiller-esque meditation on Hobbes's *Leviathan*, the covert geographies of Albion and post-Ballardian crash theory.

Vapor Trail (Clark) (John Gianvito)

At 264 minutes, this is the first half of an epic work of eco-cinema and memory excavation in which the director of *Profit Motive and the Whispering Wind* (2007) explores, with patience and intense lyricism, the calamitous legacies of the US military presence in the Philippines.

The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu (Andrei Ujica)

An uncommonly absorbing journey through the life and times of the Romanian dictator – grindingly dull public rallies, hunting-trip home movies, state visits to Universal Studios, the tribunal that prefaced his bloody death in 1989 – that makes a terrific companion piece to Ujica's (Harun Farocki co-directed) *Videograms of a Revolution* (1993).

Knight and Day (James Mangold, USA)

Sometimes it seems that all of 2010 – every plane journey I've been on, every Netflix-subscriber's flat I've visited, every magazine I've opened – has been owned by Tom Cruise and Cameron Diaz. Perhaps I've been cine-saturated into submission, but this romantic thriller – full of gassy fades, gauzy dissolves and creaky Euro mobsters – is as frothily enjoyable as seaside confectionery.

Highlights: One lunchtime at Cannes this May I had the chance to sit next to the filmmaker who has given me more pleasure than any other living: Agnès Varda. She spoke with a startling lack of sentimentality about the ever-more rapid migration of cinema from the big screen to the computer screen: "For me," she said, "it is not a problem. If you watch a film on a laptop when you're in bed, the film is closer to your heart. Sometimes you fall asleep. OK. Then you wake up and you do not know what is the film and what is your dream. This is perfect."

I stared at her hands – even darker with liver spots now than they were in *The Gleaners and I* – and tried to imagine

her playing *Final Fantasy*. We discussed her photographs of pre-Cultural Revolution China, debated at length what makes a good dessert, studied photographs of each other's cats. By contrast, this year's Cannes Festival couldn't help but seem rather drab.

PAUL JULIAN SMITH

Academic, USA

The Social Network (David Fincher)

Mysteries of Lisbon (Raúl Ruiz)

Post Mortem (Pablo Larraín)

White Material (Claire Denis)

Meek's Cutoff (Kelly Reichardt)

Highlight: Guillermo del Toro's appearance at Times Talks in the New York Times building on 21 September 2010. In person del Toro proves to be not only funny and self-deprecating but also fearfully erudite about the literary tradition of horror (the occasion was the launch of *The Fall*, his second co-authored novel in a vampire trilogy). He suggested that Bram Stoker's original *Dracula* could be seen as a response to innovations in technology such as the typewriter, which brought the old into modernity. And he went on to show how the digital effects he devised as a filmmaker in, say, *Hellboy* employ traditional hand-crafted skills: in one sequence, each tooth fairy in a swarm of hundreds has a different face and a distinct character. Tradition and innovation, craft and technology: del Toro is a model auteur for our time.

FERNANDA SOLORZANO

Critic, Mexico

Nostalgia for the Light (Patricio Guzmán)

A breathtaking documentary that weaves the story of astronomers working in a state-of-the-art observatory with that of relatives of Chilean *desaparecidos* looking for their remains. Their common ground is the Atacama desert – home of the trapped miners, a fact that enhances the metaphors in the film.

The Bad Lieutenant Port of Call:

New Orleans (Werner Herzog)

Exit through the Gift Shop (Banksy)

Even if you're in on the joke, it's a great portrayal of the artist as a fame-whore.

Leap Year (Año bisieto)

(Michael Rowe, Mexico)

A non-condescending stance on the loneliness and sense of inadequacy behind a woman's self-destructive acts.

The Ghost (Roman Polanski)

Highlight: In 2010 Mexico commemorated the centennial of its revolution and the bicentennial of its independence. It also turned out to be an incredibly violent year, due to the drug-trafficking wars. The irony didn't go unnoticed by director Luis Estrada, who took advantage of the government announcement to support "bicentennial projects" and backlashed with *El infierno*, a film that blames politics for supporting the narcs, and goes as far as to include a photograph of President Calderón. Echoing the scandal surrounding *La ley de Herodes*, his 1999 film that put an end to government censorship, Estrada hit the right note by acknowledging the non-festive mood – *El infierno*'s tagline read: "What's there to celebrate?" I for one was thrilled to attend screenings where, in spite of the grimness portrayed, the audience stood up and clapped at the end of the film – a truly emotive reaction, and a reminder of the power films have to create a sense of community, even at the hardest times.

BRAD STEVENS

Critic, UK

Road to Nowhere (Monte Hellman, USA)

Hellman's first feature film in two decades is a triumphant return for one of cinema's masters, revisiting a familiar theme – that of lives lost in obsessive pursuit of meaningless goals – with new depth and maturity.

At Ellen's Age (Im Alter von Ellen)

(Pia Marais, Germany)

Demonstrating that *The Unpolished* was no flash in the pan, this masterpiece offers further proof that Pia Marais is among Europe's most important working filmmakers.

Napoli Napoli Napoli (Abel Ferrara, Italy)

and **Mulberry St.** (Abel Ferrara, USA) Ferrara's experiments in documentary, including the earlier *Chelsea on the Rocks*, are obviously part of a larger work in progress, but it is already clear that they relate to the director's concern with performance as the central fact of our existence. These are 'documentaries' in which everyone who passes before the camera is judged according to how well or badly they play a 'role'.

Dharma Guns

(F.J. Ossang, France/Portugal)

The latest and possibly finest film from one of France's young mavericks. Imagine a George Romero zombie film made in the style of Léos Carax.

Survival of the Dead (George A. Romero, USA/Canada)

And let's not forget the latest George Romero zombie film made in the style of George Romero! Generally dismissed by the director's admirers, this remarkable work reminds us just how perceptive a political commentator Romero has always been.

Highlights: I also enjoyed *Takeshi's* (Kitano Takeshi), *Like You Know It All* (Hong Sangsoo), *Un Lac* (Philippe Grandrieux), *Vincere* (Marco Bellocchio), *Tyson* (James Toback), *Visage* (Tsai Ming-liang), *White Material* (Claire Denis), *Bellamy* (Claude Chabrol), *The Dust of Time* (Theo Angelopoulos), *My Son, My Son, What Have Ye Done* (Werner Herzog) and *Ondine* (Neil Jordan), as well as a retrospective screening of Albert Lewin's *The Living Idol* (1957) and Channel 4's transmission of Mani Kaul's *Dwidha* (1973).



AGNES VARD: "a startling lack of sentimentality"

PH STILL: POSTERS AND DESIGNS (U)

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2010 The Year in Review

But for me the most important cinematic 'event' of 2010 was watching almost the entire oeuvre of Naruse Mikio, something only made possible by members of those online communities dedicated to exploring areas of world cinema neglected by conventional distribution systems. Until recently, English-speakers who have heard that Naruse was among Japan's finest filmmakers could only view the six titles released on DVD (or, if they lived in London, the 21 titles included in BFI Southbank's 2007 retrospective). But now, 59 of Naruse's 67 surviving films are available with fan-created English subtitles (and another three with French subtitles) for free download via such services as Surreal Moviez, karagarga and eMule. For discriminating cinephiles, this is nothing short of a revolution.

ISABEL STEVENS

'Sight & Sound'

La Danse: The Paris Opera Ballet (Frederick Wiseman)

A cinematic tour of the artistry but also the sweat, toil and bureaucracy occurring behind the normally closed doors of the Paris Opera Ballet. It made me want to pirouette all the way home.

The Headless Woman (Lucrecia Martel) Forget 3D – Martel offered the complete immersive experience in her portrait of a confused woman in this hit-and-run thriller-cum-commentary on divided Argentine society. For 87 minutes the only way to get out of this character's hazy mind was to leave the cinema.

Mnemosyne (John Akomfrah) A musing on migration and memory with the most unusual combination of literary quotations, obscure archive footage and stunning icy landscapes.

The Clock (Christian Marclay) Real time meets reel time in Marclay's mind-blowing talking movie clock. Compiled from over 3000 films, it's the most ambitious video mash-up yet.

Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (Apichatpong Weerasethakul)

Highlight: Gasping in unison with hundreds of other people as the first iceberg came into view during the LFF screening of *The Great White Silence*. A hundred years after Scott's failed mission

to the Antarctic, Herbert Ponting's documentary can still thrill a cinema.

HEATHER STEWART

Cultural programming director, BFI, UK

Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (Apichatpong Weerasethakul)

The Arbor (Clio Barnard)

Winter's Bone (Debra Granik)

How I Ended This Summer

(Alexei Popogrebsky)

Le quattro volte

(Michelangelo Frammartino)

Highlights: That Jeff Keen is finally getting the international recognition he deserves, with his films now playing at this year's New York Film Festival; that the restoration of Ponting's *The Great White Silence* was such a stand-out event at this year's LFF; Sarah Turner's *Perestroika*; *The Larry Sanders Show* and *Breaking Bad* on DVD; *The Edge of the World* on Blu-ray; and the extra 25 minutes of *Metropolis*.

VLASTIMIR SUDAR

Critic, UK

Silent Souls (Aleksandr Sokolov)

The biggest surprise of the year – I haven't seen a Russian film in a while that so vividly invokes Tarkovsky, without trying hard to do so. It's an incredibly humorous film too, although its contemplations on love, identity and transience – as in all great Russian art – come across as very sad. A masterpiece.

Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (Apichatpong Weerasethakul)

If I Want to Whistle, I Whistle

(Florin Serban)

Over Your Cities Grass Will Grow

(Sophie Fiennes)

Carlos (Olivier Assayas)

Highlights: The nicest surprise – finally a high-quality restoration of Pabst's 1928 *Pandora's Box*, thanks to Berlin's Deutsche Kinemathek. The fact that the world's most 'famous' playboy, Hugh Hefner, mostly paid for this demonstrates that our commitment to the restoration of film is still below any acceptable level.

And the lowpoint? The suicide of the actor Bekim Fehmiu, who came to fame playing a gypsy in Aleksandar Petrovic's *I Even Met Happy Gypsies* (1967). An ethnic Albanian from Kosovo, born in

Sarajevo (Bosnia), trained in Belgrade (Serbia), he later acted in Hollywood and numerous Euro co-productions of varying quality. He was long aggrieved that Yugoslavia imploded in inter-ethnic conflict, and after he suffered a stroke, decided to end his own life. The Sarajevo Film Festival gave a special screening of the above film to commemorate his death – and his career that once brought these cultures together. The print came from the institution still called the Yugoslav Kinoteka, in Belgrade, but it transpired that it's in desperate need of restoration. I wonder whether Hugh Hefner will help this time?

AMY TAUBIN

Critic, USA

The Social Network (David Fincher)

Film socialisme (Jean-Luc Godard)

And Everything Is Going Fine

(Steven Soderbergh, USA)

Persécution

(Patrice Chéreau, France/Germany)

Exit through the Gift Shop (Banksy)

plus prologue to episode 3 of

The Simpsons 2010-11 season

Highlight: Works by two artists with roots in the 1960s provided experiences sufficiently intense to briefly blot out how dismal the unreal real world is. A retrospective of movies by the American avant-garde filmmaker Bruce Conner has been touring since his death in 2008. At New York's Film Forum, the programme kicked off with the electrifying music-video precursor *Cosmic Ray* (1962), five minutes of radiant high-contrast black-and-white imagery set to Ray Charles's incantatory live recording of 'What'd I Say'. It's as dazzling and kinetic a pile-up of movement and light as the final sequence of Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera*, and it's also ecstatically carnal.

More contemplative but just as encompassing an experience, Bruce Nauman's installation *Days* (sound and minimal sculptural elements arranged by the artist, movement in space improvised by the viewers) isn't in an obvious way a movie. I doubt that Nauman regards it as such, but I do. Seven pairs of stereo speakers hang in rows, between them a row of foot stools. You can sit or mill about with the crowd.

People smile goofily at each other when they realise what the sound coming from the speakers is: a variety of voices softly reciting the days of the week over and over again, but not in calendar order. Individual voices are clear only when you're close to a speaker. Otherwise the sound is a hubbub composed of words we have in common. Is there anyone who doesn't have the days of the week constantly on call in her/his head?

DAVID THOMPSON

Critic and documentarian, UK

The Ghost (Roman Polanski)

Polanski the classicist demonstrating the art of narrative pleasure through restraint and precision.

Carlos (Olivier Assayas)

Dogtooth (Yorgos Lanthimos)

A truly original and disturbing view of parental fascism.

Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives (Apichatpong Weerasethakul)

Spellbinding, erotic and moving, Apichatpong Weerasethakul continues to reinvent cinema.

The Social Network (David Fincher)

Highlights: Two magnificent presentations of silent cinema: the newly restored (courtesy of Hugh Hefner!) *Pandora's Box*, looking as though it were shot yesterday, premiered in Paris; and Hitchcock's *Blackmail* (1929) – the superior silent version – at the Barbican. Both were supplied with electrifying musical scores by Neil Brand.

The Hong Sangsoo retrospective at the BFI Southbank – exquisite, comic, subtle, never predictable, the works of a fine director scandalously never distributed in the UK.

Two remarkable new British films seen back to back at the London Film Festival: *The Arbor* and *Archipelago*, depicting totally different social worlds in radically different styles, yet both supremely rewarding.

Eavesdropping at a filming session for a behind-the-scenes documentary on Jerzy Skolimowski's 1970 masterpiece *Deep End*, I witnessed the reunion of its stars John Moulder-Brown and Jane Asher, who talked as if it had only been yesterday, joshing each other like kinder versions of their screen personae.



2 Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives Apichatpong Weerasethakul's breakthrough smash has the uncommon virtue of trusting its audience to furnish its own commentary and explanations – a virtue made possible by its magical realism. Jonathan Rosenbaum



1 The Social Network Like David Fincher's most exacting film 'Zodiac', this is a forensic study of an enigmatic outcast remaking the world according to his own desires and specifications – and of the people left behind him to clear up or make sense of the mess. Ryan Gillbey

DANIEL TRILLING

'New Statesman', UK

The Nine Muses

(John Akomfrah, Ghana/UK)

An evocative and unashamedly highbrow essay on memory and migration from the Black Audio Film Collective founder.

Wojna polsko-ruska (Snow White, Russian Red)

(Xawery Zuluski, Poland) Sex, drugs and politics in post-communist Poland, with slapstick performances and arresting cinematography.

Videoocracy

(Erik Gandini, Sweden/Denmark/UK/Finland) Not so much a documentary as a psychological thriller about the power of Berlusconi's Italian media empire.

The Headless Woman

(Lucrecia Martel) A ghost story of sorts, but one where the 'ghosts' are Argentina's poor, who haunt the middle-class family at its centre.

The Time That Remains

(Elia Suleiman, Israel/Italy/Belgium/France/USA) A history of Palestine since 1948 as seen through the story of Suleiman's own family – and his own, absurdist approach to cinema.

Highlight: Renting out a large chunk of Agnès Varda's back catalogue and watching one film a week over the summer and autumn months.

KENNETH TURAN

'LA Times', USA

Animal Kingdom

(David Michôd, Australia)

An arthouse crime saga that marks the impressive debut of Australian writer-director Michôd, this moody modern-day film noir knows just how to revitalise genre for contemporary audiences.

Inside Job

(Charles Ferguson, USA)

Ferguson's powerhouse documentary about the global financial crisis restores faith in films that shake the system by having the intelligence to ask provocative questions – and the nerve to insist that they be answered.

Cinco días sin Nora (Nora's Will)

(Mariana Chenillo, Mexico)

Though a big winner at Mexico's Ariel awards, this is the kind of film to which attention is rarely paid. Funny, poignant and tremendously appealing, it creates fully imagined eccentric characters and places them in a wryly comic world. Writer-director Chenillo displays a great sureness of touch in her first feature.

The Social Network

(David Fincher)

White Material

(Claire Denis)

Highlights: My most satisfying moment was a Los Angeles screening of the rediscovered-against-all-odds Fritz Lang cut of *Metropolis*. Having this film come back to life, being able to watch it with a live performance by the great Alloy Orchestra, and experiencing it all with a capacity crowd of 2,200 in the still vibrant Grauman's Chinese Theater let me feel more hope about the future of cinema past than I usually allow myself.

GINETTE VINCEDEAU

Academic, UK

Gainsbourg (Gainsbourg, vie héroïque)

(Joann Sfar, France/UK)

The Social Network

(David Fincher)

Les Invités de mon père (My Father's Guests)

(Anne Le Ny, France)

Tout ce qui brille

(Hervé Mimran & Géraldine Nakache, France)

The Secret in Their Eyes

(Juan José Campanella)



PANDORA'S BOX: "newly restored courtesy of Hugh Hefner"

Highlights: None of my highlights of 2010 have to do with new releases (alas). They are: seeing a class of French eight-year-olds (including my godson) presenting the project they did with their schoolteacher throughout the year alongside their 'normal' work – writing, designing and applying subtitles to a short 1950s Italian animation film. The quality of their work and their enthusiasm were fantastic.

And discovering a short 1906 film directed by Alice Guy called *Les Résultats du féminisme*, in which men push prams and iron clothes while women smoke cigars and put their feet up in cafés.

CATHERINE WHEATLEY

Academic and critic, UK

Winter's Bone

(Debra Granik)

Enter the Void

(Gaspar Noé)

It feels like 2010 has been dominated by the uniformly sleek, 'quality' arthouse movie, to the detriment of more experimental fare, and it's for that reason that I've included *Enter the Void*. A failed experiment, perhaps, and I have major ideological reservations about Noé, but at the very least it was trying to push cinema in a new direction, raggedy round the edges as it may have been.

The Headless Woman

(Lucrecia Martel)

The Arbor

(Clio Barnard)

I've shown an unconscious predilection towards women filmmakers, Martel and Barnard having produced two of the more original films I've seen during an otherwise fairly uninspiring year.

Bluebeard

(Barbe Bleue)

(Catherine Breillat, France)

Louredes

(Jessica Hausner)

I've cheated and included six films not five this year, because I really felt there was so little to choose between this pair – lovely, reined-in takes on the fairytale by two of my favourite female directors.

Highlights: I'll admit to some bias here, but what's been really exciting is seeing colleagues and friends taking matters into their own hands, getting their films made and shown outside the usual circuits. Guerrilla cinema it might not quite be, but it's great to see such small gems as Steven Eastwood's *Buried Land* and William Brown's *Afterimages* getting made and screened. I'll take those films over the likes of the overblown and overrated *I Am Love* any day of the week.

ARMOND WHITE

'New York Post', USA

Wild Grass

(Alain Resnais)

For our polarised era, Resnais makes a constantly inventive fantasia on our common idiosyncrasy.

Vincere

(Marco Bellocchio)

Still vital, still relevant, Bellocchio explores the neuroses of mass hysteria.

Mother and Child

(Rodrigo García, USA/Spain)

García delves into the meaning of community through female experience.

Life during Wartime

(Todd Solondz, USA)

America's toughest satirist takes on post-9/11 forgiveness.

Another Year

(Mike Leigh)

Highlights: Bryan Ferry's 'You Can Dance' music video, directed by Ferry Gouw, is the single most sinuous – and sensuous – piece of filmmaking this year. It perfectly complements the recent DVD release of three Josef von Sternberg classics (*The Last Command*, *Docks of New York*, *Underworld*) by continuing Sternberg's enraptured impression of eroticism as a spiritual adventure. Crooner and pop avant-gardist Ferry is seen performing the song before a disco audience of mesmerised models – indulging personal fetish but recognising, like Sternberg, unstoppable human compulsion. Imagine Don Juan enchanted by and serenading two dozen Dietrichs.

The most significant film event this year is the continued passing of the French New Wave pioneers, from Eric Rohmer's death in January to Claude Chabrol's in September.

And then the attempted besmirching of Jean-Luc Godard tied to his insincere semi-honour by Hollywood's Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Godard briefly became media star of the month when his refusal to attend the event made him the first person to publicly point out how the Academy has reversed its own principles by insulting honourees through relegating their awards to a sideshow event, disconnected from the Oscars tradition. If any filmmakers ever demonstrated their respect for film history, it's those of the *nouvelle vague*. Their passion and ingenuity are passing from our culture. There's no movement on the horizon that can match their brilliance or centrality or beauty. Let mourning begin.

SERGIO WOLF

Critic and director of BAFICI, Argentina

Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives

(Apichatpong Weerasethakul)

Toy Story 3

(Lee Unkrich)

The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceausescu

(Andrei Ujica)

Meek's Cutoff

(Kelly Reichardt)

Promises Written in Water

(Vincent Gallo, USA)

Highlights: During the last Cannes Film Festival, I met Cristi Puiu. His film *Aurora* had seemed fascinating with its winding and mysterious narrative. We were in the cafeteria of one of the hotels near the Grand Palais. It was a very pleasant conversation. I tried to convince Puiu to come to BAFICI, where his two previous films competed.

We talked of *Aurora*, and in my stubbornness to convince him to start talking about his film and suicide, I told a story of an Argentine writer who committed suicide without leaving a note – or the slightest clue about illness, debts or a lovers' quarrel. Puiu asked me two or three times: "And he left no note?" "No", I replied, as I watched his face darken. For ten minutes he sat in silence, looking at his cup of coffee, or the horizon. Had I entered a zone that might be too private or personal?

Suddenly I looked at my watch and remembered he had another interview scheduled. I offered to walk him there. His mild and ironic humour returned, but I couldn't help thinking that the shadow of death that lurks so insistently in his films – especially *Aurora* – had come between us, as if somehow we were an episode of the film dismissed in the final cut but imbued with the same fate.

ADRIAN WOOTTON

CEO, Film London

The Social Network

(David Fincher)

Another Year

(Mike Leigh)

Dark Love

(Lamorne buio)

(Antonio Capuano, Italy)

The Killer inside Me

(Michael Winterbottom)

Toy Story 3

(Lee Unkrich)

Highlight: As I never imagined I'd ever meet Bruce Springsteen, the opportunity to interview him on stage at BFI Southbank to accompany the premiere of the documentary *The Promise* (about the making of his album *Darkness on the Edge of Town*) was in itself an exciting, more than slightly scary and wondrous experience. But it was made even more magical – and a little bit surreal – by hearing him talk eloquently and enthusiastically about the importance to his songwriting of B movies and film noir, especially *Out of the Past*.

BARBARA WURM

Critic and programmer, Austria

Kosmos

(Reha Erdem, Turkey)

My Joy

(Sergei Loznitsa)

Aurora

(Cristi Puiu)

Hitparkut

(Nina Menkes, Israel)

Guest

(José Luis Guerín, Spain)

Highlights: Filmmakers discussing their work in some magical Q&As at the Viennale: Larry Cohen – shrewd, smart and hilariously ironic – and Cristi Puiu, who bared his soul, revealing a thoughtfulness bereft of any pretension.

■ Separate polls of the best DVDs and best online video clips of 2010 will be available online at www.bfi.org.uk/sightandsound from 14 and 21 December respectively

Famous for his experiments scratching directly on to celluloid, New Zealander Len Lye was a trailblazer who moved between the cinema and the art gallery. By **Ian Francis**

FREE RADICAL

Len Lye went on strike in 1958, announcing that he wouldn't be making another film until a sponsor came forward with the funds necessary to realise his ideas. Lye had built his reputation in the 1930s, repainting drizzly London in psychedelic Gasparcolor with a series of short films commissioned by the GPO Film Unit to extol the virtues of the cheaper parcel rate or printing your postcode clearly. Initially he worked by painting and stencilling directly on to celluloid, blazing a trail for a completely new approach to filmmaking.

Whether or not the messages comically tacked on to the likes of *A Colour Box* (1935) or *Rainbow Dance* (1936) had their intended impact, these rough-edged, rhythmic animations dazzled audiences and contained a wealth of innovation made possible by the trust of GPO Film Unit head John Grierson. If he could find such support on this small island, reasoned Lye, surely the USA would be crawling with opportunities? After a stint directing wartime propaganda, in 1944 he took a job at *March of Time's* New York office and began the next stage of an extraordinary creative journey that had begun on the coast of southern New Zealand at the turn of the century.

Unfortunately, Griersons proved hard to come by in America. Lye spent many years enthusiastically pitching to nonplussed broadcasters and advertising execs, meeting with only limited success. (*Mad Men* viewers might like to imagine "a slim, wiry man looking like a close relative of Ho Chi Minh, dressed in a jolly red sort of a kaftan," gracing Don Draper's office with a short-lived cameo.) Chrysler funded a one-minute film called *Rhythm* (1957), which combined jump-cut footage of their production line with tribal drumming; it won first prize at the New York Art Directors Festival, but was disqualified because the film was never aired. Even if work was thin on the ground, Lye was exhilarated by the city itself and swam freely in the local art and music scenes, seeking new contexts for his films by using them as backdrops in jazz clubs or projecting them on to shop windows for passers-by.

Increasingly detached from his English films, which he dismissed as "glorified commercial spots", Lye returned to his original celluloid experiments of the early 1920s, inspired by the scratches found on film leader. This time he went at black film stock with a range of implements found at street markets – dentist's picks, hacksaw blades, compass points – and began to create "white zig-zag-splutter scratches" that seemed to float and twitch in the void.

The technique reduced film to its bare essence, but it was neither cheap nor quick, so when an invitation arrived to participate in an experimental cinema competition in Brussels, Lye seized on the chance to convert the doodle strips hanging



PIPE DREAMS

Len Lye, above, made his name at the GPO Film Unit in the 1930s with vibrant, innovative animations such as *'Rainbow Dance'*, facing page

around his studio into a four-minute work scored by the mesmeric percussion of the African Bagirmi tribe. *Free Radicals* (1958) picked up a prize and \$5,000, and it's arguably the closest Lye got to perfection. Nonetheless it still lost money, and shortly afterwards his strike began.

To ditch cinema in favour of a whole new career when on the verge of turning 60 might look like professional suicide. In fact Lye never really abandoned filmmaking, and more to the point he had always worked across different disciplines, from batiks and paintings reflecting his love of tribal iconography to freewheeling prose poetry and earth constructions built long before land art had been conceived of. Within film too there were experiments with found footage, puppet animation, handheld *vérité* and photograms, all carried out with a unique combination of rigour and complete openness. As Alberto Cavalcanti, his former employer at the GPO Film Unit, put it in *Sight & Sound* in 1947: "Len Lye is a superb craftsman. There is no dilettantism about him and no false virtuosity."

Kinetic sculptures – or "tangibles", as Lye preferred to call them – offered a natural avenue for a man whose stock-in-trade was motion. Instead of doodling with a pencil or a needle, he took up a piece of steel and waggled it to see what would happen – an approach that followed his own manifesto from the 1930s: "Up to a certain point we must leave physical things alone and let

them speak for themselves, in movement." This nascent artform was a relatively open field for a champion of intuition and "old brain thinking", with an abiding suspicion of intellectual labels. And rather than having to hunt down sounds to accompany the images, these figures of motion came with their own ready-made soundtrack, chiming and thundering as they built in intensity with a clamour that connected straight back to one of Lye's earliest memories. The experience of kicking a kerosene can around the yard as a small boy stayed with him all his life – the "echo of tinny clashes" and "great flash of quivering sunlight" which it gave off – and he saw the tangibles as a form of energy transfer that would stop people in their tracks just as that tin can had done for him.

One of the first tangibles he made was *Blade* (1959), a tall, upright strip of steel like a saw blade planted in a circular plinth that conceals a motor. Next to the blade is a rod topped off by a cork ball (originally a ballcock from a toilet cistern). The blade begins to vibrate back and forth, gently at first, then building up to languid wave patterns, an 'S' followed by a figure of eight. After much anticipation, blade makes contact with ball, which duly pings backwards and enters the dance. Following a couple of elegant gear shifts and a frenzied climax, the two partners return to stasis, spent.

This carefully planned performance, slightly different every time, can provoke awed grins or embarrassed sniggers in gallery visitors – often both at once (the sexual subtext is hard to miss). Just like the blotches and squiggles of *Free Radicals*, though, it resists any one particular interpretation. Other steel dancers followed in the 1960s: *Universe* (large loop with suspended ball), *Fountain* (cluster of rotating rods), *Grass* (swaying fronds) and *Roundhead* (four concentric rings strung together). Their movements tended to be choreographed with a beginning, middle and end, lasting about as long as one of the short films and once again confirming Lye's deep understanding of time and rhythm. In 1961 a whole troupe of them performed for one night at New York's Museum of Modern Art, their creator hopping amongst them in his tool belt making minor adjustments to keep the whole show on the road. It was an event that positioned Lye at the vanguard of an emerging group of kinetic sculptors, the 'movement movement' – although artists like Jean Tinguely and Nicolas Schöffer were more preoccupied with the technical dimension of their work.

Lye was not an engineer. His prime motivation was to make the floor shake and stir up some wonder – to bring a sense of Aztec ritual into the gallery. Rapidly outstripping the available technology and resources, his ideas were confined to sketchbooks until such time as the world saw fit to catch up – most ambitiously, a kinetic temple in the desert. A version of *Universe* 60 feet tall would form the entrance to a family of enormous tangi-



bles, including an “undulating sea serpent” emitting 6 million volts of electricity from its tongue by way of a finale.

When outlining these notions, Lye was quite prepared for scepticism, but he never let it limit his horizons. This was someone who hit on a vocation – composing with motion – as a teenager on his paper round, and then stuck with it his entire life, following it wherever it took him. Significant resilience was involved, and a notable lack of interest in how his work might be received. Asked in a 1963 interview whether his films were made for any particular audience, he replied:

“Oh, goodness, no. They were just made for me... My excitement in life was to discover something that’s exciting to me. Now how the hell can I work it out if it has to be significant to an audience? It’s the last thing on earth I’d be interested in.”

Universe builder

Lye has often been bracketed with another pioneer of direct cinema, his GPO colleague Norman McLaren, but although they undoubtedly influenced and admired one another, the above response gives some indication of where they differed. For all his experimentation, McLaren was acutely aware of his audience. With *Flicker Film* (1961), for example, he predated the optical barrage of structural cinema by a good few years, only to shelve it because it was “too esoteric, even for me”. And although Lye may have envied the safe haven offered to McLaren by the National Film Board of Canada, it’s impossible to imagine him staying put within the same institution for over 40 years, as McLaren did. Lye belongs more firmly in

Initially he worked by painting directly on to celluloid, a completely new approach to filmmaking

the tradition of self-sufficient, bloody-minded universe builders like William Blake or Alasdair Gray, working with whatever tools are available to give his ideas life while paying little heed to fashion or finances.

This is partly why Len Lye is nowhere near as well known as he should be. It doesn’t help that his works are scattered across different eras and artforms, or that experimental cinema and kinetic sculpture have had very little to do with each other. There have also been practical obstacles: availability of the films being limited to VHS copies and 16mm prints that carry as many accidental scratches as deliberate ones; galleries nervous of hosting sculptures that vibrate violently and require constant maintenance.

Developments in technology have eased these issues; as Lye himself predicted, he seems to make more sense in the 21st century. We are now used to artists shuttling between the gallery and the cinema. So much of the visual language he helped to develop has been absorbed into mainstream culture. Above all, Lye’s was a vision profoundly rooted in movement and sensation, one which resonates all the more powerfully in an age of digital disembodiment.

The process of gathering up this jumbled legacy began in the 1970s, driven by Lye’s second wife Ann. After half a century away, she encouraged a return visit to New Zealand, and coming full circle gave the artist an opportunity not only to reconnect with his past but also to meet supporters who would take on the role of custodians and curators. His home country’s first nod to its prodigal son may have been a TV documentary called *Len Who?*, but New Zealand became home to the Len Lye Foundation and has produced the definitive piece of Lye scholarship in Roger Horrocks’ 2001 biography.

At the Foundation’s base in New Plymouth, plans are afoot for a Len Lye Centre; on the seafront you can find 45 metres of red fibreglass bobbing in the breeze: a scaled-up version of the *Wind Wand* that Lye first road-tested on an empty lot in Greenwich Village 50 years ago. Shortly before he died in 1980, Lye was given a grant that enabled him to revisit two of his most precious films – *Free Radicals* and its sister piece *Particles in Space* (1966) – and complete them to his satisfaction. “We take our happy moments to the grave, but art lives,” he wrote. Now the circle continues, and for the first time in the UK an exhibition has brought together under one roof the full spectrum of this pulsating “one-man modern art movement”.

■ The exhibition ‘Len Lye: The Body Electric’ is at Ikon Gallery, Birmingham until 13 February 2011. Len Lye’s films are available on the Re-voir DVD ‘Rhythms’; his GPO films are available on the BFI’s ‘GPO Film Unit Collection’ DVDs, vol. 1 ‘Addressing the Nation’ and vol. 2 ‘We Live in Two Worlds’



COUNTER CULTURE

Nick James dissects the unique tonal touch employed by Ernst Lubitsch in *'The Shop Around the Corner'*, which fills out its romantic confection with a moving portrayal of economic desperation we can empathise with today



BITTERSWEET SHOP
Ernst Lubitsch, above, grew up in the retail world of *'The Shop Around the Corner'*; left; right, Christmas offers resolution for its lovers (James Stewart and Margaret Sullivan)



Ernst Lubitsch grew up in Berlin as the son of the Russian Jewish émigré owner of a dressmaking company. He knew the world of shops and they feature often in his films. Perhaps witnessing the patter of his father's employees – the centrality of role play to the life of a salesman – encouraged the young Lubitsch to play roles, and drew him towards acting as a profession. Before he became a director, he was a successful self-mocking character actor, first on the German stage for Max Reinhardt and later in films. That he should end up in Hollywood seems a natural progression for a Jewish sophisticate trying to escape his trade roots.

Jewish traders of European extraction, such as Adolph Zukor (furs), Carl Laemmle (retail

clothing) and Louis B. Mayer (scrap metal), founded the Hollywood studio business. There was always an affinity between 'putting on a show' to sell shop items and 'putting on a show' in movies. In his seminal 1988 book *An Empire of Their Own*, Neal Gabler says that the Jewish traders made "a sustained attempt to live a fiction and to cast its spell over the minds of others". Lubitsch moved to Hollywood at the invitation of Mary Pickford after the international success of his historical dramas *Madame DuBarry* (1919) and *Anna Boleyn* (1920). She hired him to direct her in *Rosita* (1923), and though they didn't get on that well, Lubitsch remained in Hollywood and flourished as one of its most accomplished artists.

In the context of *The Shop Around the Corner*, it is easy to imagine the young Lubitsch as Pepi, the

teenage errand boy of Matuschek and Co. played so brilliantly by William Tracy as the sharpest Budapest street kid turned legit. Pepi constantly complains that the pampered wife of proprietor Mr Matuschek runs his legs off after hours, so his favourite occupation is to imitate her in a high voice: "Pepi, go to the dressmaker. Oh Pepi, will you please pick up a package at the drugstore?"

Of course, Lubitsch's father did not work in a leather-goods store, and in any case the film was based not on any Lubitsch autobiographical matter but on Nikolaus Laszlo's 1936 play *Parfumerie*, but we know that one essential ingredient of what came to be known as 'the Lubitsch touch' is that the director would act out every role for every actor he was directing. This is what accounts for the extraordinary consistency of tone in his films, including those that he produced but were directed by the likes of Frank Borzage and Otto Preminger. A talent for mimicry, pretence and persuasion was the foundation of his approach.

When attempting to describe 'the Lubitsch touch', however, some of the most vivid examples are visual rather than performative. The opening sequence of *Trouble in Paradise* (1932), for instance, starts with a shot of a dustbin. A man enters the scene and picks up the dustbin, but it's only as he walks to a canal to dump the garbage into a gondola – breaking into 'O sole mio' having done so – that we see Venice glittering at night, the gorgeous setting for this most exquisitely cynical true-love tryst between two jewel thieves who can't resist fleecing each other during seduction.

There's a more complex definition of 'the Lubitsch touch' that I'll touch on later, but by the time he made *The Shop Around the Corner* in 1940 Lubitsch's brand of expectation rug-pulling had become ingrained in what was expected of a Hollywood movie. Indeed, it is often argued that it was Lubitsch, not D.W. Griffith, who was the true author of the dominant style (rather than the dominant technological approach) of Hollywood cinema in its golden years. "He invented the modern Hollywood," Jean Renoir once said. "The man was so strong that when he was asked by Hollywood to work there, he not only didn't lose his Berlin style... he converted the Hollywood industry to his own way of expression."

The Shop Around the Corner almost entirely concerns the eight people who work at Matuschek and Co., although one superlative aspect of the film is how much of what happens off screen is a pertinent part of the narrative – not least Mrs Matuschek, whom we never see nor hear. Mr Matuschek (Frank Morgan) is an ageing proprietor whose lifelong business instincts are no longer a match for those of his chief salesman Alfred Kralik (James Stewart), whom Matuschek is grooming to take over as manager. The film begins the morning after Kralik has been a guest at the Matuschek home and both are feeling bilious from "too much goose liver". They have a disagreement about some cigarette boxes Matuschek wants to buy that play the repetitive Russian folk melody 'Ochi Tchernya' when you open them. Kralik, rightly, thinks they won't sell; Matuschek is annoyed with him.

The rest of the shop's staff includes: Pirovitch (Felix Bressart), an unassuming family man, and the film's moral centre in whom everyone confides; in contrast is Vadas (Joseph Schildkraut), a dandy of a certain age feared by everyone as "a rat and stool pigeon"; there are two ladies, the demure

Though Lubitsch's films are always graceful and light and designed for maximum viewing pleasure, there's an underpinning of real circumstance

◀ Flora (Sara Haden) and the shopaholic Ilona (Inez Courtney), who stay mostly in the background; and the newest member, Klara Novak (Margaret Sullivan), who comes in from the street to be met by Kralik as a customer when she's really a shop-girl after a job. The Kralik-Novak relationship goes further down the wrong track when, to get the job, Klara sides with Mr Matuschek on the issue of the cigarette boxes and manages to sell one as a "candy conscious" box, whose tune will remind you every time you succumb to a piece of candy that maybe you should cut down on your consumption.

What neither Novak nor Kralik knows as they bicker and demean each other all day is that each is the other's romantic pen-pal. This is the kind of spectacular social irony that 'the Lubitsch touch' feeds on, but it is absolutely bound in to the social position in which its protagonists find themselves. The story originates in the Great Depression, about people for whom the magic words are 'paycheque', 'bonus' and 'raise'. Though Mr Matuschek will turn out to be a benevolent figure (indeed, his staff count keeps on increasing while the shop remains mostly empty – at least until the Christmas climax) his whims are potentially lethal, as Kralik discovers when he is summarily 'let go' after a disagreement, albeit with a shining reference.

Though Lubitsch's films are always graceful and light and designed for maximum easy viewing pleasure, there's a solid underpinning of real circumstance to *The Shop Around the Corner*. One of the most fascinating aspects of Hollywood film in its heyday is the economical use of space. There are only three scenes in the film that occur away from the shop: the café where the pen-pals are supposed to meet – although Klara doesn't find out for some time that the Kralik she meets and thoroughly patronises was her blind date; Klara's bedroom, where she takes sick after her beau doesn't seem to

show; and the hospital room where Matuschek ends up for reasons you'll have to watch the film to discover. Everything else happens either just outside the shop or in the shop's four spaces: the main hall, Mr Matuschek's office, the staff room and the stockroom, to which Pirovitch disappears whenever he hears Matuschek announce, "All I want is your honest opinion." All this would reinforce the idea that the shop is the world and a sort of prison – you have to make it there or fail – if it were not for the evocatively deft way that the world outside is conjured from within.

This is a yet more sophisticated version of Lubitsch's famous propensity for making the audience imagine what's going on behind a closed door. From just a few grace-notes we can picture Pirovitch's modest home life, what it must be like to have dinner at Mr Matuschek's house with his flirtatious wife (too much goose liver and all), and where, after all, the vile Vadas's tokens of "good luck" come from. More refined still is the moment when, towards the end, Klara describes her early feelings about Kralik to him – we become aware that Lubitsch and Sullivan have given us not the slightest indication of these feelings, so we're even invited to reimagine what we've already seen. Perhaps the simplest example of making the invisible imaginable, though, is when Pepi says to Mr Matuschek near the end: "You see that girl over there on the corner? Well, I'm her Santa Claus." Lubitsch knows he doesn't need to show us the girl.

When others try to reproduce 'the Lubitsch touch', it often comes a cropper. There have been two remakes of *The Shop Around the Corner* and neither works. Among the many reasons why, the most obvious they share is that they lack the fear of unemployment that underpins the humour in the story – and that might make it pertinent again for contemporary audiences. In the *Good Old*

Summertime (1949) is an entertaining musical remake starring Judy Garland and Van Johnson, but no threat to a livelihood can matter much in a musical. The yuppie protagonists of the regrettable *You've Got Mail* (1998), played by Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks, are also unlikely ever to find themselves on skid row, whatever the film's outcome.

A better contemporary place to find traces of Lubitsch is in the television comedy series *30 Rock*. If the writers of that show don't have Billy Wilder's famous sign "How would Lubitsch have done it?" hanging up, it must be because it's printed on the lids of their lattes. To give you one brief example, the show's low-self-esteem heroine, comedy-show producer Liz Lemon (Tina Fey), is asked on a date to a high-glamour party by "the hair" – the kind of handsome guy she considers way beyond her league – and can't cope. She walks out of the party and he runs after her into a shop, where she explains to him that they're chalk and cheese while she waits to pay for an item. When the shop owner refuses to change her \$100 bill, they both turn and berate him in exactly the same words – "You can't do that. It's illegal!" – and find what they have in common: a petty sense of entitlement.

This scene scores in at least one of the three components of Jonathan Rosenbaum's breakdown of 'the Lubitsch touch'. Lubitsch, like the *30 Rock* writers, has 1) "a way of regarding his characters that could be described as a critical affection for flawed individuals who operate according to double standards". As for 2), while we may no longer live in an age when the "European capacity to represent the cosmopolitan sophistication of continental Europeans to Americans – and with a double edge" matters so much, we still find the same dynamic in the way that *30 Rock*'s Jack (Alec Baldwin) regularly forces an unwanted double-edged sophistication of high glamour and pretentiousness on Lemon. In the case of 3), however, "a graceful way of handling music as an integral part of the film's construction," *30 Rock* utterly fails. Which shows that even a team of hotshot American television writers can't really compete.

Returning to those neglected figures, the lovers of *The Shop Around the Corner*, we're back with people who, in the terms of the old deference, know their place – something that politicians and financiers in the West seem to want us all to relearn. The dreams of sophistication of the shop assistants revolve around a love of language and literature, of reading *Anna Karenina* and *Crime and Punishment*. James Stewart's doleful lapdog seriousness meets Margaret Sullivan's preening pretension most beautifully in the following exchange in which Kralik now knows that Klara is his correspondent, but she remains ignorant – as is clear when she disparages him in comparison to her pen-pal: "I really wouldn't care to scratch your surface, Mr Kralik, because I know exactly what I'd find: instead of a heart, a handbag; instead of a soul, a suitcase; and instead of an intellect, a cigarette lighter... that doesn't work." His response is, "Well, that's very nicely put." You get the feeling that if Ernst Lubitsch stabbed you, you'd feel grateful somehow and the wound would heal in a minute.

■ *'The Shop Around the Corner'* is rereleased in selected cinemas from 10 December

ROCK STAR
The dynamics of US television series '30 Rock' share some of 'the Lubitsch touch', in the interaction of Liz Lemon (Tina Fey) and Jack (Alec Baldwin)





Image: Lost Horizon, part of our Frank Capra season at BFI Southbank

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THE MARK OF KANE

*With Sight & Sound's once-in-a-decade Greatest Film of All Time poll looming in 2012, **David Thomson** launches a series of occasional debates on the canon, here wondering whether 'Citizen Kane' will – or should – retain its top spot*



Do you have time for a few words on the 2012 election? No, not that one – I fear that Barack Obama controls his own future, or surveys it from afar. That November decision is too grave and frightening to talk about. I refer, instead, to the election this magazine will stage in 2012.

It is in years ending with 2, you may recall, that *Sight & Sound* brings back its poll of critics, writers and filmmakers on the best films ever made. The Top Ten. Now I don't mean to get involved with all ten, or not immediately. My worry is over number one, *Citizen Kane*, the picture that won this poll in 1962, 1972, 1982, 1992 and 2002.

Such steady glory has made Orson Welles's picture a kind of password. Nowadays *Citizen Kane* stands for all of cinema, and I am not about to suggest that it deserves less than that mind-numbing status. Still, I regret the numbing of minds and I wonder whether this automatic authority has stopped young people from seeing the 1941 picture, or really looking at it when they do sit there in the dark with it? If it wins again in 2012, that will be 50 years in which it has been top – and that can turn the 'top' from a real place into ➡



THE CANDIDATE
'Citizen Kane', right, has triumphed at the polls, but is 'The Magnificent Ambersons', top left, the true masterpiece of Orson Welles, bottom left?



BY STILAS, POSTERS AND DESIGNS (1)

The greatest film of all time?



◀ a rather hollow idea. Kane begins to resemble Queen Victoria (and she reigned 63 years).

Please don't jump on this modest request to think carefully. I have admitted many times (too many?) that *Citizen Kane* changed – or focused – my life. I love the film, and not just for its alleged technical innovations (like deep focus, overlapping talk, sets with ceilings, or its carte blanche contract). I love its emotion, and the fact that after all these years and viewings its message remains unsettled. More than 1941 grasped, it is a film about meaning and purpose. The question endures: is "Rosebud" the way to an answer for life, or just the macguffin a dying man utters to set up his own labyrinth?

I have written a book about Orson Welles and I think I have read all the others on him – from Peter Noble to Barbara Leaming, from Rosenbaum to McBride to Conrad. And I hope to stick around to see what Simon Callow will say at the end of his fabulously Wellesian three-volume project. I have suggested before that the thing about books on Welles is that they are all worthwhile – because the man was so recklessly averse to being dull.

Forget top tens for the moment, but acknowledge the possibility that Orson Welles was the most interesting, complicated and tricky person who ever picked up a movie camera. Part of that antipathy to dullness is in the way he did so many other things – he was radio and theatre, bull-fighting and cheap wine, he was a magician and a would-be politician, he was father and husband, enormous but beautiful, he had the most sincere voice as well as the most fraudulent. He was lovable and awful. And that bundle of contradictions energises Charles Foster Kane as much as it does George Orson Welles.

Think of him that way, then look at the work again, and the thing most likely to stop you putting *Kane* at number one may be the thought of *The Magnificent Ambersons*. The Christmas I dream of is the discovery of Orson's director's cut of his 1942 film in some loft in Rio de Janeiro, its nitrate stable, its ending complete, with the Ambersons facing ruin – a film for our time? If we had that, I dare say, *Ambersons* would go to number one, if only because it would prove the more tragic and intimate of the first two films. It is still possible to find *Kane* too clever or too much of the hard-to-map labyrinth.

Anyone who has lived would be in tears at the end of his *Ambersons*. And we want to be moved, don't we?

There's the point. Like life, cinema relies on the principle of 'show me something I haven't seen before'. So the habit of *Citizen Kane* can become dismaying. Think of the marvel in opening that 2012 issue of *Sight & Sound* to find that the winner is... *Sunrise*? *Tokyo Story*? *The Godfather*? *Vertigo*? *There Will Be Blood*? *Juke Girl*? (It's a little 1942 picture by Curtis Bernhardt, with Ann Sheridan and Ronald Reagan. No, it's not a masterpiece, but I like it. And I doubt its chance of toppling *Kane* is much less than that of the Coppola, the Ozu or the Hitchcock.)

Frenzies of democracy

By now, wary readers may be asking themselves, "Is he wondering whether we should deliberately not vote for *Citizen Kane*?" Well no, not yet, anyway. (If in the next 1000 words I suggest that, you may write me off.) I'm not even sure that I won't vote for it myself. Though if you study the results over the decades, it seems that many voters flinch from putting their top ten in an incriminating order – how do we begin to assess whether *La Règle du jeu* is 'better' than *L'Atalante* or *Lola Montès*? Instead, the critics use alphabetical order or chronology, because we know in our bones that orders of merit are just a foolish and vulgar game. But vulgarity is waxing larger, and its artificial light now eclipses sunrise, the pale moon after the rain, light in August or even *Leclisse*.

I think I know the editor of *Sight & Sound* well enough to guess he would demur if pushed to defend the idea of a valid hierarchy, a fixed ordering, in the films made since 1895. Yet as the

editor of an instrument of the British Film Institute (not the most secure body in a shaking culture), he would concede that the poll has to run. If there is wisdom in forgoing it – in saying, "Come along now, children, we're beyond this" – there is also a weary recognition that kids now demand fun as a right. So I suspect he longs to face a dawn when he adds up the votes and discovers that the winner is *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, *Pretty Woman* or *Juke Girl*. That news would be posted all over the world, and be a brief 'hit', and the value to *Sight & Sound* would be more substantial than the relief to Carl Dreyer or Curtis Bernhardt.

The game is not just vulgar, it's stupid. Yet we all love games and – as the winner in another *Sight & Sound* poll recently – I must say I enjoyed winning as much as I know it was ridiculous. Was the cinema always prey to these games? Remember that the Oscars only arrived in 1927-8, and they are tottering now. Who really cares who wins an Oscar? Yet movie writers and bloggers live on that 'contest' as much as the Academy depends on the TV revenue from awards night.

Once upon a time we went to the movies, automatically and habitually, without keeping scorecards. We didn't expect to rank the best summer days; we revelled in summer. It may have been in Brussels in 1958 that the games began. There was a world's fair of some kind (and who needs world's fairs now we have the Net?) and a panel of young directors (it included Satyajit Ray and Robert Aldrich) was asked to determine the best films ever made. *Cahiers du cinéma*, then at its peak of subversive brilliance, responded with another list, and we were off. By 1962, Kane was top at *Sight & Sound*. But don't forget that in 1952 Welles' film had not appeared in the top-ten list? Why? Because it was hard to see and had been since 1941.

So list-making goes on apace now and newspapers are always seeking fresh angles for reader polls (best left-handed character?) where *Cinema Paradiso* is likely to win. The critics are cool but patient with such frenzies of democracy. They will pass, we tell ourselves, and 'the public' is a concept that has to be endured, if not embraced. So the games have become a climate now assisted by the new ease with which nearly any movie can be found and 'enjoyed' on that small screen we most of us live by. But the *Sight & Sound* poll does stand above the collective of lesser polls. It's been around

THERE WILL BE CHANGE
Will 'There Will Be Blood',
top, be a new entry? Will
'Tokyo Story', below, better
its no. 5 position in the
2002 critics' poll?

By now, wary readers may be asking themselves, “Is he wondering whether we should deliberately not vote for Citizen Kane?”



COULD BE A CONTENDER
Marlon Brando in
'The Godfather', top, no. 2
in the 2002 directors' poll,
while 'Vertigo', below, came
second with the critics

longer. It draws on an 'informed' electorate. It restricts itself to once a decade. Do you see why the magazine is trapped into playing the game it invented?

The worry lies in the underlying notion that if the cinema is the new art and the modern sensation – not to mention the playground of the young – then shouldn't it renew itself every few years? Doesn't it deserve upstart miracles, audacious ventures, and next year's breakthrough in self-destructive beauty, formal insurrection and razzle-dazzle? So the polls have celebrated wonderful and important movies made since 1941 – and over the decades there has been some thought that *Vertigo* or the first two parts of *The Godfather* might take over the championship. Those are treasure houses, and I speak as someone entranced by *Vertigo* in 1958 when it was a widely dismissed flop. But honestly, as time passes, isn't there something goofy in *Vertigo*, not just far-fetched but crazy, that restricts it. (Is it as good as *Rear Window*?) And while I watch *The Godfather* every year, I do so to reprise known pleasures – whereas with *Kane* I find inner rooms and mysteries at every viewing. *Citizen Kane*, if I may say so, is more intelligent or questioning than *Vertigo* or *The Godfather*. And it is fixed on more important and eternal issues.

There are classics of modern film – take your pick: *Pierrot le fou*, *Persona*, *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*, *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*, *Céline and Julie Go Boating*, *The Shining*, *Raging Bull*... Or from more recent decades, *Taste of Cherry*, *The Puppetmaster*, *The Lives of Others*...? Moreover it's always possible that one of those (or one of the many others you could add to the list) will assert themselves 20 or so years after they were made and be revealed not just as great films, but greater works than their first audiences appreciated.

Then how do so many of us still feel the best picture ever made came 70 years ago, as a rebuke to the factory system that existed then – and as the work of an arrogant, comeuppance-ready 25-year-old? Let's go further: is *Citizen Kane* really more than *La Règle du jeu*, *The Shop Around the Corner*, *His Girl Friday* and *The Lady Eve*? (And I am confining myself here to more or less the moment of *Kane*, which was crowded out with pictures that look glorious now but were deemed routine then.)

I don't know what to do, but I want to suggest that if *Citizen Kane* wins again in 2012, it would be

BFI STILL, POSTERS AND DESIGNS (1)

The greatest film of all time?



◀ understandable yet depressing – and the downcast feelings would reflect on the medium and on us. The poll is not going to be abandoned, but it might be conducted with more flexibility.

In American sports (you see, I love games too), there is a tradition of teams retiring a player's number from future use – so no New York Yankee will ever again be number 5, because it was Joe DiMaggio's number. No Boston Celtic will wear 33 because it was Larry Bird. And so on. You may never have heard of, let alone seen, these masters, but you can grasp the idea of a pantheon, a hall of fame, that lets later players strive for their excellence. I think that's why there have been efforts to mount campaigns for 'modern classics' among movies, free from the daunting pressure of the oldies.

Cultural anxieties

But the cinema's relationship with history is uneasy. On the one hand, we can see so much now. Video's range is enormous. Turner Classic Movies recently ran all four hours of Boris Barnet and Fyodor Otsep's *Miss Mend* (1926) in a sparkling print. In San Francisco a few months ago, a packed house exulted in the new, enlarged version of *Metropolis* with a live score by the Alloy Orchestra that was like a rock concert. That strange, muddled film was a sensation again.

On the other hand, anyone who has taught film or tried to write about it in recent years knows the dispiriting conviction in young people that the medium began with *Jaws* and *Star Wars*, sensations in their day that may have marked the close of a vital period in filmmaking. Quite recently I met a kid at a good American college who is doing a film major. He was very knowledgeable about certain aspects of film, but a moment came when I happened to mention Gary Cooper. Blank look. This young man had not seen a Cooper film. He had not heard of him.

A part of what I fear is that while a few of us continue to vote *Citizen Kane* in to its paramount position, young people may have stopped seeing it. There are plenty of reasons for that: it is in black and white; it talks too much of the time, and with such rapidity; it is difficult for a beginner to follow; and kids don't recognise any of the people in the picture. Plus they may not have much sympathy with that old institution, the newspaper.

Writers wouldn't stoop to a public contest on the best novels or poems ever written – would they? And the Kindle carries Laurence Sterne as easily as Colm Toibin. In academe, it is taken for granted that excellent young minds might spend three years on Thomas Middleton or Ford Madox Ford. And film has its lower-case academy now where people take 12 years to write a book on Curtis Bernhardt – agreed, I don't know that book, but I'm ready. (Turns out there is such a book, an interview, edited by his son.)

What is altered is the sensationalism, and it's natural enough that academe is disapproving of that drug when official, controlled medicines might be prescribed. There are some who feel the Brussels poll of 1958 coincides with the first demise of cinema – not just the deaths of moguls and stars (DeMille and Gary Cooper, Gable and Mack Sennett, for example), not just the worshipful revisionism of the New Wave, redoing American genres by turning them inside out, but the emergence from Hollywood of edgy films that say, "Oh come on, you don't take this flim-flam seriously anymore, do you?" Films like *Touch of Evil*, *Rio Bravo*, *Some Like It Hot*, *Anatomy of a Murder*, *Psycho* – films that saute the old gaze with post-modern mockery. So *Rio Bravo* is not a western, but a movie about a group of people making a western.

Not that *Citizen Kane* was ever in the mainstream. It was a deliberately arty picture from a young man who intended to defy Hollywood, and who could have spelled out why its factory was as bad for critical thinking and progress as the New York *Inquirer*. Welles was revolutionary and self-destructive, and he would be adopted by the many cultural anxieties that perceived Hollywood as a rotten place and a delusion, as well as the factory

that had given us *Sunrise*, *Bringing up Baby* and *The Shop Around the Corner*.

I seem to recall in a final interview (and all his interviews had the weight of the last word) that Welles offered a murmured remark how *Citizen Kane* had not yet been surpassed. I agreed with him then, and now. But the 'best' candidate is not always the one to select. I have a hunch that while Barack Obama was the inspiring choice in 2008, as well as the promise of change, Hillary Clinton might have been the shrewd pick and the working president more likely to be re-elected in 2012. As I say, it's a guess. I do not propose or foresee any diminution in the study of Orson Welles, or the obsession with him. He was right in thinking he was important; and if sometimes he seemed self-important, well, that was a pioneering trend too.

You may say that resolving not to vote for *Kane* in 2012 would be an entirely artificial gesture. You're right. But the poll and what it signifies are also made of mist, whereas the reality of film history is factual and mundane. Across the street from where I live, a cinema – the Clay (a Wellesian name) is closing in a few days' time. It was once the jewel of arthouse cinemas in San Francisco. It was never a great screen, but how many people now notice such requirements, or prefer them to their home-cinema set-up? Home is grand and nice, but the movies were once a place for crowds, palaces and a sensation.

The first time I saw *Citizen Kane* (in 1955, I think at the Classic, Tooting), I hurried to the earliest screening, because of what I'd heard and read about the film (and because of Orson's wicked charm in *The Third Man*). I anticipated a large crowd, but I was the only person there. That was a heady way to see what I remember as a fresh print – fresh eyes, anyway. And for a time – for decades, even – I believed the picture was the lesson and influence of that afternoon. But as I look back on it, I'm not sure the real lesson wasn't the emptiness of the cinema and the Xanadu-like splendour it allowed me.

So get ready for the vote next year. Survey the field. Go back to some of the old films I've mentioned. Take a look at Gary Cooper. Don't miss *Citizen Kane*, and pray for a restored *Ambersons*. Dismiss the poll as the self-promoting device of a nervous institute, if you will. But think of what it conveys. And don't forget *Juke Girl*.

LEST WE FORGET
For many filmgoers today, cinema began with 'Star Wars'; top: 'Juke Girl'; below, with Ronald Reagan and Ann Sheridan



T-SHIRTS AND OTHER APPAREL INSPIRED BY THE LOVE OF GREAT FILMS



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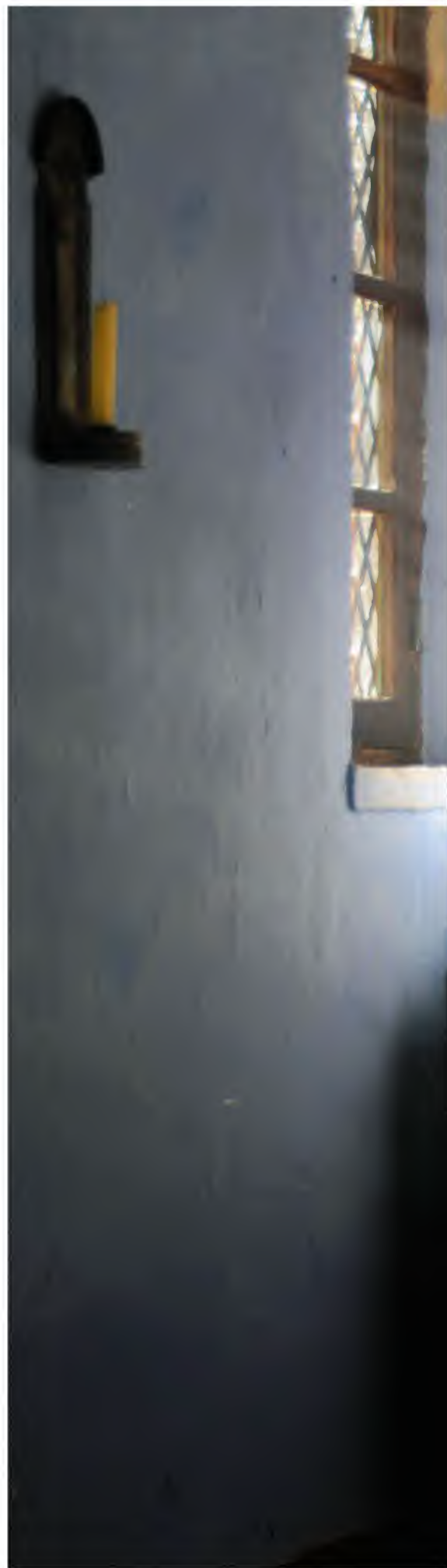
*Based on the true story of a group of monks in Algeria, 'Of Gods and Men' is one of several recent films to examine links between French and Islamic culture. But it's the film's evocation of the monks' inner state that really resonates, says **Jonathan Romney***

LONG DAY'S JOURNEY
 Brother Christophe (Olivier Rabourdin, facing page) wrestles with his conscience as the monks must decide whether to flee or stay and face their fate

The title of Xavier Beauvois's second feature as director was *Don't Forget You're Going to Die* (*N'oublie pas que tu vas mourir*, 1995). That could also serve as a motto for his latest film *Of Gods and Men* (*Des Hommes et des dieux*), a drama that was one of the critical successes of Cannes this year, where it won both the Grand Prix and the Ecumenical Award. The film has recently become – improbably, you might think, given its sombre theme and execution – a major box-office success in France. Like Beauvois's earlier film, *Of Gods and Men* is concerned with mortality – with the inevitability of death and the appropriate attitude with which it should be met.

Although this is something we learn only in the closing titles, *Of Gods and Men* is based on the 1996 kidnapping and killing of seven Cistercian monks from the monastery of Tibhirine in Algeria, during that country's civil war. An Islamic extremist group is believed to have abducted and killed the French monks; their severed heads were found, but not their bodies (the film doesn't mention this, perhaps so as not to close on a sensationalist note).

The story offers every prospect for a tense hostage narrative, a fraught analysis of French-Algerian relations, a from-the-headlines drama of the Costa-Gavras school. However, Beauvois and collaborator Etienne Comar – the film's co-writer and producer, who originally approached the director with his script – choose a different approach. They focus on events prior to the catastrophe, and on everyday life in the monastery, creating what is primarily a low-key drama of interiors and interiority. The film is set largely within the monastery, with the monks appraising their situation as their adopted country is beset by





The monks are no more glorified than soldiers would be in an equivalent film about the army. This is the monastic equivalent of 'The Hurt Locker'

◀ violent conflict and extremist attacks on civilians, Algerian and foreign alike. The monks – exiles rather than missionaries, and in no way proselytisers for Christianity – must choose between staying or fleeing. They must ask themselves whether it makes more sense to save their own lives by departing, or whether it behoves them – not just as holy men, but as men – to stand firm in the face of almost certain death.

This might suggest a tendentious debate on moral courage, specifically Christian and specifically male – one of those films that emphasise the masculinity of the priest as conflicted hero (see Melville's *Léon Morin, prêtre*, or Pialat's *Sous le soleil de Satan*). In Beauvois's film, however, maleness exists in the context of a desexualised male communality, under the sign of fraternity. In interviews, Beauvois has said that the film's essential theme is "*liberté, égalité, fraternité*" – the secular Holy Trinity of the French Republic.

Of the three, liberty is the most explicitly invoked, notably by the monastery's resident medic Brother Luc (the veteran Michael Lonsdale), who comments, "I'm not scared of terrorists, even less the army. I'm not scared of death, I'm a free man." Luc sounds a note both historical and theological when he comments that in his long history as a doctor, he has had dealings with all sorts, including Nazis and even the Devil.

Implicit in the secular trinity of values is the ideal of solidarity. A central – and problematic – issue is the matter of these Christians' involvement and identification with Algeria, and with the values of Islam. The parallelism between the two religions is discussed explicitly, but is first signalled very subtly early on in the film when, after the monastery's early-morning service, we hear the faint but distinct voice outside of the muezzin's call to prayer.

From the start, the film stresses the cordial kinship between the monks and the Algerian mountain community in which they have settled. Early on, the monks are invited to a celebration in the village, and wholeheartedly join in Islamic prayers. The monastery's abbot is a scholarly theologian named Christian (Lambert Wilson), on whose desk we see copies of the writings of St Benedict and St Francis – and the Koran. Christian feels a potent intellectual and spiritual bond with Islam. Early in the film, he and Luc visit two Algerian friends, village elders who express their shock about the extremist violence in Algeria – specifically the story of an 18-year-old girl stabbed for not wearing hijab. Christian says his monks will pray for the girl, adding, "Inshallah." What's crucial is the monks' solidarity with their host culture, and adoption of its words of faith.

Soon afterwards, a group of armed mujahideen arrive at the monastery demanding that Luc come to tend a wounded man. Christian calmly refuses – Luc is old, and their medicine belongs to the village. He also makes a contentious move, which

is to cite the Koran – he asks the armed men if they know the verse that states, "Priests and monks... they wax not proud." It could be read as a sign of presumption to quote the Koran at Muslims, but Christian means to establish a shared language and set of beliefs. He also explains that it is Christmas, when his religion celebrates the birth of its own 'Prince of Peace'. The mujahideen leader Ali Fayattia (Farid Larbi) offers Christian his hand, and leaves in peace.

When Christian declines an offer of protection from the Algerian army, his refusal occasions a debate in the monastery, one brother objecting that, by making decisions on everyone's behalf, Christian has undermined the principle of community. Christian also finds himself at odds with the otherwise sympathetic local official who makes no bones about blaming French colonialism for the parlous state of his country. The official hands over an order from Algeria's Ministry of the Interior, demanding that the monks leave the country; again, Christian refuses.

Later, an army commander accuses Christian of being indulgent with the rebels; he tells Christian that his men have dragged the dead Fayattia along the ground behind a truck (one of the violent incidents referred to in the film, although the only one shown is the murder of some Croatian workers). The commander asks Christian to identify Fayattia's body, which the monk does, joining his hands in prayer – at which point the soldier makes a gesture of dismissive contempt. The army has become as much a menace as the guerrillas, and indeed (although it's never referred to in the film) there have been suspicions that the Algerian army played a part, accidental or otherwise, in the

monks' eventual death. (I haven't read it, but there is a book-length account of the case, *The Monks of Tibhirine*, by American journalist John W. Kiser.)

The decision facing the monks is a complex and painful one. There are matters of social responsibility to consider. For the monks, helping the local community is an essential part of their *raison d'être*; they dispense medical care, social assistance and, presumably, provide work and income for the villagers with their cultivation of honey. Their friends in the village certainly want the monks to stay, telling them that they help ensure order and stability.

There are more abstract reasons to consider too. The pressing question becomes one of courage, resistance, principle – all motives that might be subsumed, for a religious believer, under the heading of faith. The monks are initially divided on the question; among them, Brother Christophe (Olivier Rabourdin) is the most tormented. In his dark night of the soul, he is seen alone, praying and calling out, "Help me, help me," while his fellows listen in distress from their own cells. The film stresses that, while the brothers form a collectivity, each must make his decision utterly alone. No 'we're there for you buddy' cosiness here – souls are searched in appropriately austere manner.

Christophe's troubles approach resolution in a later scene with Christian, who tells him that, in entering the order, "You've already given your life." Etienne Comar has cited *The Seven Samurai* – of all films – as a model for *Of Gods and Men*, but it makes sense. Traditionally, the proper comportment for the samurai is to act as if he were already dead, and this is the challenge facing the spiritual samurai of the Tibhirine monastery.

Communal soul

Essential to the film's style, shape and tone are several scenes that could be regarded either as interludes in the action or as its essential moments, in which the monks chant together in the Cistercian liturgical ritual (the actors themselves sing, with severe beauty). These passages are solemn, still, photographed by Caroline Champetier so as to merge the men rather than framing them as individuals; seen side on, from behind, they are a collective being voicing a communal soul. These scenes allow the viewer – and the characters – periods of mental repose, during which to contemplate the action and its issues with calm detachment. At the same time, we understand that the singing is an integral part of the monks' daily work – part of the work of producing a community.

The meaning of that work becomes clear when an army helicopter flies over the monastery – a scene shot partly from the POV of a hypothetical soldier peering over a gun. As the chopper flies over, its martial noise threatening to drown out the prayers, the monks for the first time look up, turn and – their arms around each other – sing in an act of peaceful symbolic resistance.



HAND OF FRIENDSHIP
Abbot Christian (Lambert Wilson, left) establishes dialogue with local mujahideen leader Ali Fayattia (Farid Larbi, right)

Chanting apart, the film eschews music; Beauvois refuses to impose rhetorical commentary with a score. There is one moment, however, when music is used very potently. Comar's original script had a scene near the end in which the monks sing Jacques Brel while washing up. He and Beauvois opted instead to have the monks gather at table – one of two scenes in which the framing explicitly evokes the placement of the disciples at Leonardo's *Last Supper*. Luc enters with wine and surprises his fellows by switching on a cassette player, which fills the room with music from *Swan Lake*.

Initially bemused, the monks exchange smiles at this secular blessing. Each is seen in close-up, silently musing on their situation – some with gentle smiles, others with signs of dread, all seemingly with resignation. Their thoughts are simply suggested through the actors' more or less muted facial expressions, in a sublime testimony to the eloquence of the wordless close-up. It is the dinner scene that seals the viewer's bond with the monks, drawing the audience into these men's intimate community (one reason why the film needs to be seen in a cinema). Beauvois boldly strikes a delicate balance, risking kitsch with this depiction of devout men relishing the almost corny rapture of a classical greatest hit (but then, what do you think monks listen to – Stockhausen?).

The film's ability to evoke inner states is partly a result of superb actors astutely cast, partly for their looks: Lambert Wilson, with his bony, delicately pensive physiognomy; the placid, gnome-like features of the venerable Jacques Herlin, as Amédée; the rougher, ordinary-man looks of Rabourdin's Christophe; and Lonsdale's face, that ragged monument of French cinema, with its historical traces of sensual worldliness. (Beauvois chose to strip out Comar's original back stories, but Luc's remains in part: listening to a young village woman's worries about love and marriage, he confesses that he knew earthly love many times before finding his vocation.)

Of Gods and Men comes as a departure in the career of a gifted filmmaker who has previously been nothing if not earthly. Beauvois's last film as director was the realist police drama *Le Petit lieutenant* (2005), while *Selon Mathieu* (2000) – despite its quasi-religious title – was about a man seducing his boss's wife as an act of revenge. His only film previously released in Britain was his second, *Don't Forget You're Going to Die*, a powerful if narcissistic existential drama in which Beauvois himself took the lead role of a man facing his mortality in the shape of Aids and drugs. (Also a frequent actor in other directors' films, Beauvois was most recently seen by UK audiences opposite Isabelle Huppert in Benoît Jacquot's *Villa Amalia*.)

What impresses about his new film is its clear-minded detachment – the classicism and modesty of its style. Avoiding overt rhetoric, it neither imposes a clear moral or political meaning on events, nor overstates the dignity of its charac-

ters. We see the monks doing what they do not because of some ineffable nobility (still less divinity), but because praying, questioning themselves and sacrificing themselves come with their job. They are no more glorified than career soldiers would be in an equivalent film about the army; devotion is a part of professional commitment, even though that commitment may lead to extreme places. This is, you might say, the monastic equivalent of *The Hurt Locker*.

Message of peace

Of Gods and Men gives ample scope for theological debate – a key passage, foreshadowing the monks' diverse fates, quotes Matthew 24:40, "One shall be taken and the other left." (Two monks of Tibhirine were indeed spared.) But the filmmakers have particularly stressed a secular, loosely political purpose: Comar has said that the film is more "a message of peace and friendship between France and Algeria than a discourse about colonialism". This is largely the spirit in which it has been received, although a dissenting note was struck by *Libération*'s Didier Péron: he questioned the lack of an explicitly political perspective, in the light of which the monks' position might more clearly appear as "unctuous paternalism". Certainly, the film's commercial success would suggest that audiences find its themes as reassuring as they are challenging. Along with its message of tolerance and courage, it offers similar contemplative pleasures to another unexpected arthouse hit – *Into Great Silence* (*Die grosse Stille*, 2005), Philip Gröning's documentary about a Trappist monastery.

But from a more political perspective, *Of Gods and Men* also belongs in a context of cinematic

debate on the role of Islam and Arab culture in contemporary France. In Cannes, the film competed alongside *Outside the Law* (*Hors la loi*), Rachid Bouchareb's rousing angry celebration of the undercover guerrillas of the FLN, fighting for Algerian independence in 1950s-60s France – pitched as a conventionally thrilling action drama. Last year, Jacques Audiard's *A Prophet* (*Un Prophète*) groundbreakingly depicted the rise of an Arab gangland antihero (and controversially, showed him exploiting Islamic identity for personal advancement). Then there's *Hadewijch* (screened at the LFF in 2009, but yet to be released in the UK), Bruno Dumont's perverse and confrontational drama about a disillusioned nun – a film that can be seen as assertively anti-religious in its equation of Catholic and Islamic extremisms. In a wider post-colonial perspective, *Of Gods and Men* also resembles Claire Denis's more impressionistic and ambivalent *White Material*, another story of outsiders who refuse to leave a country in turmoil – although Isabelle Huppert's protagonist is more overtly a colonial hangover, determined to squeeze the last drop of comfort (or coffee) from a country that no longer wants her around.

In *White Material*, French and Africans alike find their crises culminating in a mass collapse into violence, even insanity – perhaps, for Denis, the only conceivable outcome of the relationship between colonialist and colonised. In *Of Gods and Men*, something else is at stake. However out of place they seem in modern Algeria, the monks aspire to replace and correct colonialism with a benign post-colonialism, in which the outsider remains as guest, helper, kin. One can see how this position might serve to cover a more duplicitous exploitation – Péron's "unctuous paternalism". Yet Christian's closing voiceover leaves no doubt about the sincerity of his relationship to Algeria. As he anticipates meeting his maker, he mounts a defence of the Islam that he sees as misunderstood in Europe, and distorted in the Algerian conflict: "This country and Islam for me... are a body and soul... God willing, I will merge my gaze in the Father's and contemplate with Him His children of Islam, as He sees them."

Religious audiences may well see *Of Gods and Men* as a statement about modern sainthood – and certainly the film's stylistic reserve will contribute to that, evoking a sense of austere grace in everyday life. But secular viewers will find a humanist serenity in a film that, equally avoiding the traps of piety and cynicism, speaks with simple candour for understanding – a political message that is no less urgent for the calm formal reserve with which it is conveyed by Beauvois and Comar, and by their characters. *Of Gods and Men* achieves a grace that, in secular terms, is best translated simply as 'sanity'.

■ *'Of Gods and Men' is released on 3 December, and is reviewed on page 77*



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The veteran Brother Luc (Michael Lonsdale) tends to the sick in the local mountain community, who value the monks' presence

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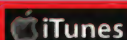
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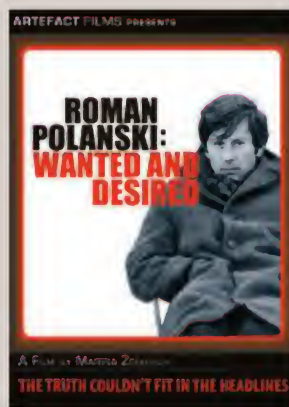
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.....

Alien nation

Blending road-movie and sci-fi, the fantastic and the everyday, *'Monsters'* is an astonishingly assured feature debut for its young British writer, director and special-effects designer Gareth Edwards, says **Nick Roddick**

Monsters

Gareth Edwards, 2010

Monsters does for the CGI generation what George A. Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* did for 1960s horror: takes a series of increasingly tired conventions and reinvents them. And it does so in much the same way that Romero did: by creating a world that is, at base, completely realistic, then matter-of-factly introducing an element that changes everything – there, the zombies; here, aliens.

An astonishing achievement for first-time British feature director Gareth Edwards, most of whose previous experience has been in special effects, *Monsters* was shot for under £500,000 with a limited crew and two largely unknown actors. It's a sci-fi thriller based on the premise that most of Mexico has become an Infected Zone populated by alien creatures. Two young Americans – photographer Andrew Kaulder (Scoot McNairy) and rich traveller Sam Wynden (Whitney Able) – get stranded south of the Zone at the start of "the season" (the aliens' most active period) and are forced to cross it to return to the US. *Monsters* is as much a love story as it is a sci-fi thriller – and as much a road movie as it is either of those.

One of the film's greatest pleasures is the casual way in which Edwards (credited as production designer as well as writer, director, cinematographer and effects designer) integrates the fantastic into the everyday: the road signs that casually mark off the kilometres to the Infected Zone; the children's cartoon featuring a comic alien glimpsed on TV during the first overnight stop; the casual references to "the season", as though it should be obvious to everyone what this means.

The crew evidently followed the same path as the protagonists, feeding off and building on what they found, occasionally dressing the real with elements of the unreal, as when they pass a cart hauling away the engine of a crashed US jet for scrap, or sail past some eerily abandoned hotel complexes on their way through



When Andrew comes across the money shot he has been seeking all along, instead of taking a picture, he gently covers the child's body

the Zone. And the one lavishly developed physical effect – the pulsating, flashing alien spores attached to trees – is both appropriately creepy and a convincing imagination of what an alien life-form might look like.

The film certainly doesn't look low-budget, and one suspects that, even if he'd had the resources of a Zack Snyder or a Michael Bay, Edwards would still have operated on a less-is-more principle. His film is more in the vein of Robert Wise's 1963 *The Haunting* than *Cloverfield* – which could be a problem commercially. Edwards makes few concessions to the core horror audience. The visceral, night-vision opening apart, there are no sudden

shocks – the initial alien attacks come not in heart-jolting cuts but via glimpses. Indeed, the only other shock the film delivers is not scary at all, but occurs in a soundtrack cut from a quiet riverside scene to the roar of the riverboat's engine. Despite its obvious potential, this is no film for gore hounds: the eviscerated body of the lead guerrilla is not shown, merely glimpsed at the edge of the frame, causing Andrew to throw up.

Monsters is a film that's very aware that other films precede it. The first sound is of a marine humming Wagner's 'Ride of the Valkyries', *Apocalypse Now*-style, as they barrel along the Pan-American Highway, and Andrew and Sam's

river journey clearly references the same movie. But *Monsters* is equally determined to do things its own way. This is especially true of Edwards's attitude to genre. The film certainly uses basic horror-film tropes – Andrew and Sam are thrown together in a situation of peril not once but twice, the second time inescapably. There are also a couple of those 'don't go in there' moments without which horror movies could not operate. But Andrew and Sam are far from the stereotype model of boy protector/girl in peril. Sam's role as the only Spanish-speaker gives her equal footing on the journey. And the traditional insensitivity of the disaster-zone photographer, set up in some of Andrew's early scenes, is very much undercut when he finally comes across the money shot he has been seeking all along: a child killed by an alien. He removes the coat that has served as wrapping for his camera in his backpack, but instead of taking a picture, he gently covers the child's body.

Andrew and Sam may start out as stereotypes – battle-weary pap, spoilt little rich girl – but they quickly develop into fully rounded characters who engage our attention as much as the eponymous creatures. Indeed the film is more or less a two-hander (the amiable sleazeball selling ferry tickets is the only other person to come close to character status) and the chemistry between McNairy and Able, a couple in real life, is one of the things that drives the film.

Where Edwards does veer back into Romero territory, however, is in the film's final act, which begins as a lyrical journey through some breathtaking Mexican jungle scenery, includes a Mayan pyramid and the film's most impressive CGI creation – the wall around the United States – before ending in a deserted, desolate Texas, an Armageddon-style landscape as scary and hopeless as anything in *The Road*. The area's one living inhabitant, a mad homeless woman pushing a trolley of possessions, gets fourth billing in the credits and delivers the film's most disturbing sound, a barking yelp of aggression and despair.





SEASONAL DISORDER

When traveller Sam Wynden (Whitney Able, above) is injured in the alien *Infected Zone*, photojournalist Andrew Kaulder (Scoot McNairy, far left) has to escort her to safety through Mexico

But this final sequence also elevates *Monsters* from a highly competent creature feature to something more intriguing. An isolated gas station is beautifully shot by Edwards, its lights glowing against a flat and empty landscape. It's also the setting for the film's all-important coda, in which fear gives way to awe as Andrew and Sam watch an encounter between two of the creatures bonding in a world that, to them, is far more alien than the Zone the humans have just been through. Just before it, both humans have effectively recognised that their attachment to one another is now deeper than the bonds they believed they shared with the other people in their lives: Andrew with his five-year-old son; Sam with her fiancé. In her final conversation with the latter, Sam signs off with a perfunctory "I love you", but the look that subsequently passes between her and Andrew is far more eloquent than her words.

The ending of *Monsters* is both desolate – the world, as in *Night of*

the Living Dead (1968), is never going to be the same again – and uplifting, not just in the coming-together of hero and heroine, but in the way their relationship with the 'threat' is fundamentally changed by seeing the mating-dance-style encounter between the two aliens. The film's actual final scene – the arrival of two Humvees full of casually aggressive soldiers, walkie-talkies crackling, who separate them and hustle them away to 'safety' – seems like an intrusion.

What Edwards achieves here is in the grand tradition of fantasy literature and cinema: a sense that the humans who have been through the mill of the narrative now share more with the creatures they have been battling than they do with the people they knew before the narrative began. Mina Harker opening herself to Count Dracula is the romantic archetype; Ben (Duane Jones) in Romero's film – the only surviving human in the farmhouse, gunned down by trigger-happy National Guardsmen who can't see the difference between him and the zombies – its bleak modern equivalent. In much the same vein, *Monsters* is a radical parable for an alienated age.

For credits and synopsis, see page 76

Stealing from reality

Gareth Edwards on inspiration and effects in *'Monsters'*

Initially I thought of doing *'Monsters'* as a doc, following an alien-invasion story across the globe for a year. But then I got worried that this might be the only chance I got to do a film, and I didn't want it to stink of documentary, so I turned it into a drama. The analogy really was the notion of hurricane season – the creatures come into a certain area at a certain time of year, but most people would be sensible and avoid it. That's why the leading man's a photojournalist, because he'd be drawn towards the danger, and in order to make him initially give a shit about the girl, she became the boss's daughter. The story sort of wrote itself from there.

If *'Cloverfield'* is like September 11, my film is Afghanistan six years later – and people have just got bored with it. The stuff I'm really proud of in the film is where they get to the motel, stick on the TV, and it's like CNN showing some night-vision alien attack. But Sam just crashes out, like it's just wallpaper.

When you pick something that's so fantastical as a concept you have to ground it in reality as much as possible, and you look for the equivalent in the real world, which is why there are elements in the film



GARETH EDWARDS

that seem to relate to America's immigration policy towards Mexico or the 'war on terror'. You make a monster movie more real by stealing from reality.

The software can track camera movements, so that if you add anything to the material you've shot on location it'll appear solid in the background. Then you use Photoshop or the like to paint in the imagery, whether it's signs on the wall or military vehicles. Technically the film isn't really groundbreaking. It's just a matter of treating everything as if it's authentic so the vibe of the shot gives it that feeling that it's really happening. Gareth Edwards talked to Trevor Johnston

Aftershock

People's Republic of China/
Hong Kong 2010

Director: Feng Xiaogang

With Xu Fan, Zhang Jingchu,
Li Chen, Zhang Zifeng

Certificate 15 135m 29s

Aftershock opens with snazzy CGI shots from the point-of-view of a dragonfly (it's part of a vast swarm fleeing Tangshan, in premonition of the devastating earthquake which will hit the city that night) and shortly after delivers a fairly convincing snapshot of the earthquake itself with an effects sequence showing the collapse of most buildings in one neighbourhood and focusing on the decimation of one family. As day dawns, the newly widowed Li Yuanni (alternately over- and under-played by the director's wife, Xu Fan) faces the most agonising of choices: her twin children are trapped in the rubble, and freeing one of them will, she's told, inevitably cause the other's death. Threatened with the loss of both, she opts to save her son – thereby traumatising her daughter, who will go on to be rescued after all but will not achieve reconciliation with the mother who consigned her to death until 32 years later. The film, in other words, is not the CGI-driven blockbuster spectacle intimidated by the early scenes but instead a typical Chinese tear-jerking family melodrama, less seismic than choked-up.

Aftershock is framed by earthquakes: the Tangshan earthquake in 1976 initiates the tragedy in the Fang family (the father dies, the mother dies emotionally, the daughter is left for dead and thus consigned to 32 years of traumatised embitterment) and it takes the Sichuan earthquake in 2008 to bring mother, son and daughter back together at the father's grave. In between the two, the film offers a panorama of (a) the vast social changes in China in the decades since Mao's death, and (b) the emotional disasters that occur when parents and children selfishly neglect the Confucian bonds that bind them. The wilfully unfilial behaviour of the children comes in for a bit of stick, but most of the blame for everything that blights these lives is laid on fate: the acts of a capricious god make humans suffer. That's why the film's documentary coda (it shows the memorial wall listing the 240,000 victims of the Tangshan earthquake) is underpinned by Faye Wang's tremulous rendition of a song derived from a Buddhist sutra – although the coda also reminds us that the film was initially commissioned by Tangshan city council.

To echo John Ford on Cecil B. DeMille: there's no one in the room who knows more about what the Chinese public wants than Feng Xiaogang, and he certainly knows how to give it to them. Like DeMille, Feng started out as a sparky and somewhat iconoclastic talent (his early hits were cynical comedies, heavy with attitude) but evolved into a peddler of bombast, challenging no one and enthusiastically endorsing the status quo. Here, there's



Rescue operation: 'Aftershock'

no whisper of criticism of the corrupt officials who allowed shoddy, unsafe building in the Sichuan earthquake zone, and the People's Liberation Army couldn't wish for a more glowing testimonial. Feng is smart enough to know that understatement is nowadays more potent than full-on melodramatic excess. He leaves several lachrymose events offscreen and doesn't overload the climaxes with emotive music. But the film remains excruciatingly old-fashioned. The 'heightened realism' of the performances and the explication of clunkiness of almost every line of dialogue would be right at home in a communist film of the 1960s.

◆ Tony Rayns

CREDITS

Directed by
Feng Xiaogang
Produced by
Guo Yanhong
Han Sanping
Wang Zhongjun
Producers
Ren Zhonglun
Peter Lam Kin Ngok
Wang Tongyuan
Albert Yeung
Screenplay
Su Xiaowei
Adapted from the novel
by Zhang Ling
Cinematography
Lu Yue
Editor
Xiao Yang
Art Direction
Huo Tingxiao
Original Music
Wang Liguang

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Group Corporation,
Huayi Brothers Media
Corporation present in
association with
Shanghai Film Group
Corporation, Zhejiang
Media Group & Co. Ltd.,
Media Asia Films Ltd.,
Emperor Classic Films
Company Limited
Associate Production
Company: China Film
Co-Production
Corporation

In association with
Tangshan Broadcast
and Television Media
Co., Ltd. China Film
Group Film Production
Corporation, Huayi
Brothers Media
Corporation,
Shanghai Film Group
Corporation, Zhejiang
Media Group & Co. Ltd.,
Media Asia Films Ltd.,
Emperor Classic Films
Company Limited
Executive Producers
Chen Kuofu
Wang Zhonglei
Guoying Chen
Han Xiaoli
Jiang Tao
Hu Xiaofeng
Zhao Haicheng
Yao Jianguo
**Co-executive
Producers**
Xiong Guoxiang
Zhang Dajun
Lu Huijun
Wang Tianyun
Cheng Weidong
Shirley Lau
Albert Lee
Line Producer
Hu Xiaofeng
Associate Producers
Gao Ruifeng
Shi Dongming
Li Qingshan
Yu Dongjie
Song Lian
Bernard Yang
Peng Mingyu
Fu Wenxia
Ni Zhengwei
Lorraine Ho
Roddy Wong
**Unit Production
Managers**
Yin Kun
Li Xiaoli

Production Managers

Yang Dong
Lu Sen
Zhu Rulin
**Production
Co-ordinator**
Li Wanjuan
Financial Supervisors
Zhao Zhiguo
Xue Xiaoping
Location Managers
Zhu Ziliang
Li Jun
Xiao Li
Li Deli
Wei Tian
Action Unit Directors
Park Ju Chun
Action Unit:
Liu Mingzhe
Foreign Crew – Korea:
Piao Zhe
Assistant Directors
Zhang Changzheng
Ying Tong
Ren Yongqiang
Liu Wei
Liu Zuotao
Script Supervisors
Sun Hao
Wang Jiali
Yin Haiyan
Camera Operators
Team A
Chen Zhuxiang
Sun Ligang
Team B
Wang Min
He Yang
Ke Yuming
Chief Gaffer
Kang Xiaotian
Visual Effects
Supervisor:
Phil Jones
Producer:

Jiang Yanming
Visual Effects by
Technicolor (Beijing)
Visual Technology Co.,
Ltd.
Blackginger
MPC
Loki Visual Effects Inc
**Special Effects
Supervisor**
Chung Do Ahn
**Korea Special Effects
Producer**
Foreign Crew:
Son Janghyun
Special Effects
Foreign Crew:
Demolition
Hanil
Executive Art Director
Zhao Bin
Artistic Director
Nie Chenxi
Visual Design
Shi Haiying
**Set Decorating
Manager**
Liu Jinyong
Artistic Consultant
Zeng Qinghui
Property Masters
Xu Xiaolong
Li Baotai
Wardrobe Supervisor
Liu Xiaoli
Hair/Make-up Artist
Wang Jun
**Special Make-up
Effects**
Supervisor:
Shin Jae Ho
Foreign Crew:
Mage
Music Performed by
Asian Philharmonic
Orchestra

Conductor:
Wang Liguang
Music Supervisor
Zhang Hongguang
Soundtrack
"Ending Song" – Faye
Wong
Sound Designer
Kim Sukwon
Sound Supervisor
Wu Jiang
Re-recording Mixers
Wang Gang
Wang Dong
Stunt Co-ordinators
Mao Guoqing
Su Ping
Liu Xueshen
Guo Huizhong
Shi Zhanjie
Hu Lifeng
Li Meilin
Wang Mingling
Liu Ping
Wang Qingmei
Foreign Crew:
Yoon Jinyul
Beak Donghyun
Park Kabjin
Consultant
Zhao Yong

CAST

Xu Fan
Li Yuanni
Zhang Jingchu
Fang Deng, 'Wang Deng'
Li Chen
Fang Da
Zhang Zifeng
Fang Deng (childhood)
Zhang Jiajun
Fang Da (childhood)
Lu Yi
Yang Zhi

Zhang Guoqiang
Fang Daqiang
Wang Ziwen
Xiao He
Yang Lixin
Lao Niu
Lu Zhong
grandmother
Yong Mei
aunt
Lili Liu
Si Chuan mother
Chen Daoming
Wang Deqing
Chen Jin
Dong Guilan
Zhang Baowen
Wang Zhiguo's wife
Ma Qiuzi
Director Zhao
Lu Jing
woman teacher
David F. Morris
Alexander
Jing Yuan
Zhang Xin
Li Bu
Bai Longfei
Chen Xinwen
Qian Jialin
Qian Tongtong
Jin Huan
Chang Fangyuan

Dolby Digital
In Colour
[2.35:1]
Subtitles

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Metrodome Distribution
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12,194 ft +29 frames

Chinese theatrical title
Tangshan Dadizhen

SYNOPSIS 1976: When an earthquake strikes Tangshan, China, during the night of 27/28 July, driver Fang Daqiang is killed and his twin children Fang Deng and Fang Da are trapped in rubble. Fang's widow Li Yuanni learns that rescuing one child will cause the death of the other; in extremis, she opts to save her son Da, who loses his left arm. But Deng (aware that she was left to die) later revives and is adopted by the childless couple Wang Deqing and Dong Guilan, both People's Liberation Army officers. Initially taciturn, she grows up as Wang Deng.

1986: Da quits school and leaves for Hangzhou, where he drives a pedicab. Deng leaves her adoptive parents to study medicine, also in Hangzhou. After two years she returns home to see Dong Guilan, now dying in hospital. Shortly before graduating, Deng gets pregnant. She refuses an abortion, leaves her boyfriend (student Yang Zhi) and disappears to have the baby.

1995: Now a company boss, Da brings his fiancée Xiao He to meet his mother, who stubbornly refuses his offer of a better home. Deng supports herself and her daughter Diandian by giving English lessons. One Spring Festival, Deng and Diandian visit the long-neglected Wang Deqing; Deng tells him that she will marry a lawyer and live abroad.

2008: In Vancouver, Deng hears of the Sichuan earthquake and rushes back to China to join the relief effort. Da also joins the rescue crews, and Deng finds him when she overhears his account of their childhood trauma. Together, they return to Tangshan to see Li Yuanni and pay respects at their father's grave.

The Be All and End All

United Kingdom 2009

Director: Bruce Webb

With Eugene Byrne, Josh Bolt, Connor McIntyre, Liza Tarbuck
Certificate 15 98m 49s

The interesting things about debut producer-director Bruce Webb's imperfect Liverpool-set comedy are its seeming immersion in the values of its teenage protagonists, its particular regionalism and its own version of class-conscious populism. There's not much sophistication in the script (by Steve Lewis and Tony Owen, who also wrote the equally schematised 2008 Mackenzie Crook comedy *Three and Out*), which sets up its premise well enough – how can underage, hospitalised Robbie lose his virginity before he dies? – and doggedly, if episodically, proceeds to its destination, where he 'becomes a man' through an act of charity/love. (The film, in as far as it candidly explores sex for the terminally sick or disabled, joins pretty rarefied company, including Jean-Pierre Sinapi's *Uneasy Riders* and Lars von Trier's *Breaking the Waves*, though its intentions are quite obviously not as correctional as the first of these, nor as provocative as the second.)

In tone, if not in event, Webb's feature steers clear of tragicomedy, taking its place rather in the tradition of populist working-class northern comedy – from *Letter to Brezhnev* (1985) through *The Full Monty* (1997) to *Calendar Girls* (2003). But where those movies applied a degree of self-criticism or self-awareness in their comic examination of defiant reactions to unemployment, poverty, lowered expectations or second-class status, Webb's film is largely uninflected.

The question is: if in the end the film seems hopelessly – if not entirely unentertainingly – naïve, how much is this merely a reflection of the naivety of Robbie and his best mate Ziggy, and of the filmmakers' desire to stay within the boundaries of their youngsters' vision?

That the film's vision is sometimes persuasive and funny has much to do with the freshness of the two young non-professional leads, Eugene Byrne and Josh Bolt. Both are allowed considerable physical freedom by the director, and the best scenes are where they are encouraged to josh, play off and react to each other; less successful are the moments where high dramatics take them beyond their range. More problematic are certain key scenes, scattered through the film, where explosive male anger seems to be applauded – such as when Robbie's father (the formidable Connor McIntyre) raises his voice to Ziggy to stop his questioning. Most of the film's women meanwhile are seen as either ideally compliant earth mothers or 'liberated' sexual modernists able to donate their bodies in acts of uncomplicated, boy-satisfying generosity.

Although this isn't a juvenile world dominated by the 'absent father', Ziggy is a character highly influenced by the absence of his own dad. The boys' obsessive sexual quest is conducted without paternal advice; the only other significant adult male figures in the film are using sex in similarly compensatory ways themselves, both with prostitutes. There is an inherent sadness attached to this, which – like Robbie's impending death – *The Be All and End All* allows but doesn't highlight; it's just there as part of the difficult 'reality' the boys face, from which the comedy springs, and which gives the film a genuine sense, for all its faults, of depth, optimism and quiet triumph.

♦♦ Wally Hammond

SYNOPSIS A seaside caravan park near Liverpool, the present. Fifteen-year-old Ziggy is on holiday with best friend Robbie. They are given vodka by sympathetic barmaid Sophie, a student working during the summer break whom Robbie admires. The following morning Robbie collapses. He is taken to hospital and placed in a children's ward run by nurse Tina. Robbie is diagnosed with a fatal heart disease.

Robbie explains his sole wish to Ziggy: not to die a virgin. He implores Ziggy to help him find a sex partner. Ziggy appeals to Kirsty, one of the girls at school, who initially agrees but finds herself unable to go through with it when she arrives at Robbie's bedside. Ziggy, asked to destroy pornography on Robbie's home computer, finds emails from Sophie.

Ziggy takes Robbie on a trolley to a massage parlour, just as it's raided by police; the friends narrowly escape. Next Ziggy visits the red-light district, where his money is stolen by a pimp; he befriends prostitute Krystal and sees Robbie's father touring the area. Ziggy argues with his mother Kate about his own absent dad. He spends a night exploring New Brighton in an attempt to find his father.

Ziggy's final effort for Robbie is to employ Krystal and persuade Tina to provide a room for them. Krystal turns up at the hospital as arranged, but is preceded by Sophie, who has sex with Robbie. Robbie dies; Ziggy finds his father walking on Liverpool Bay.

CREDITS

Director

Bruce Webb

Producer

Bruce Webb

Written by

Steve Lewis

Tony Owen

Director of Photography

Zillah Bowes

Editor

Joe Wilby

Production Designer

Tine Jespersen

Composer/Conductor/Orchestrations

Richard Lannoy

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Production Companies

Be All Films presents a

Whatever Pictures

production

Made with the support

of Screen South

Executive Producers

Michael Woodward

Paul Morrissey

Co-producer

John Maxwell

Line Producer

Michelle Billington

Associate Producers

Stuart Hatwell

Alex Lewis

Production Co-ordinator

Leila Merabti

Location Manager

Alex Harrison

Post-producer

Matthew Locke

Assistant Directors

1st: Bailey Marks

2nd: Peter Candler

Script Supervisor

Sara Doughty

Casting Director

Michelle Billington

Gaffer

Ewan Cassidy

Soundtrack

"Tell Me", "Kelly's Eye" –

The Zen Hussies;

"Faultlines"; "The Good

Years" – Karine Polwart;

"Still Shaking" – The

Ashtray Hearts;

"Sunday Night" – The

Zincs

Art Director/Additional Production Designer

Jo Cook

Costume Designer

Lydia Hardiman

Hair/Make-up Designer

Arry Moorcroft

Hair/Make-up Artist

Nichola Keating

Sound Recordist

Nigel Albermaniche

Re-recording Mixer

Kath Pollard

Supervising Sound Editor

Justine Angus

CAST

Eugene Byrne

Ziggy

Josh Bolt

Robbie Wallace

Connor McIntyre

Mr Wallace

Liza Tarbuck

Tina

Neve McIntosh

Kate

Catherine Rice

Mrs Wallace

Bryony Seth

Sophie

Leanne Best

Krystal

Emily Bonner

Karen Blackwell

Mick Colligan

pimp

Suzanne Collins

WPC

Lisa Davies

prostitute 2

Julie Duffy

prostitute 3

Kelly Forshaw

little Debbie

Thomas Gordon

Harry Gordon

Ziggy's stepbrothers

Natasha Hendrick

Debbie Richards

Kate Henry

Ziggy's stepmother

Taylor Johnson

Lorna

Molly Melia

Catherine Holmes

Shanelle Monaghan

Cheryl Hanwell

Jason Mulhearn

Ziggy's dad

Vicky Nightingale

staff nurse

Eryl Loyd Parry

Gerry Cavanagh

Carla Prior

prostitute 4

Darren Rapier

Dr Palmer

Jack Rigby

older boy

Zelina Robero

Tara Morgan

Roman Ryan

Ryan

James Spofforth

PC

Laura Swift

Kirsty

Bethan Thomas

hospital clerk

Kerry Williams

Vanessa

Leah Whitaker

prostitute 1

Lenny Wood

vicar

Dave Jackson

Becky Stringer

Greg Milton

Tony Smith

punk band musicians

'Dead Cowboys'

Phil Sung

chippy guy

Beverley Eve

staff nurse 2

Ged Whitmore

immigration 1

Garry Whitmore

immigration 2

Steve McGowan

immigration 3

Kirsty Hale

Helen Webster

Michelle King

Kerstin Atkin

brothel girls

Bryn Williams

Billy Allen

Bob Barr

Paul Dave

brothel customers

Dolby Digital

In Colour

[L85:1]

Distributor

Verve Pictures

8,893 ft +6 frames



Virgin mobile: Eugene Byrne, Josh Bolt

Broken Sun

Australia 2007

Director: Brad Haynes

With Jai Koutrae, Shingo Usami, Kentaro Hara, Kuni Hashimoto

Certificate 15 91m 38s

A study of what we'd now recognise as post-traumatic stress disorder, Brad Haynes' feature debut revolves around two central characters, Australian and Japanese, a generation apart but each with vivid memories of active participation in a major conflict. In the case of the middle-aged Jack, it's World War I, as an ANZAC sergeant shipped over to Pozières, France, whereas Masaru's experience is in 1944 (the year of the film's 'present') in the south-west Pacific. The roots of their traumas are unearthed gradually, and the film pays at least as much attention to cultural factors affecting their response.

Jack has retired to a farm in New South Wales, where he lives a solitary existence briefly interrupted by the postman (who greets him with a cheery "G'day, Mr Grumpy!") and a gruff Aboriginal neighbour. However for Masaru, a prisoner of war in a nearby camp, identity is firmly bound up with that of platoon, family and country; his superior officer Kamimura reinforces this with pep talks about how Japanese POWs are national pariahs, and how the road to redemption lies in killing as many soldiers as possible – or, failing that, suicide. Attempts at this 'honourable' alternative have already been made – one of the film's briefer flashbacks shows Masaru and his closest comrade Shingo placing their heads on railway tracks, only to be stymied by the train stopping in time.

So when Jack finds a dazed Masaru on his farm and takes him captive, neither man conforms to stereotype. Although Jack immediately rants about Japanese atrocities, it's clear that the sensitive Masaru (who whiles away the time discerning anthropomorphic shapes in clouds) has played no part in them. Indeed, despite Kamimura ordering him to "paint the jungle red", Masaru's body count numbers just one by the film's conclusion – and that someone who actively wants to die. By contrast,



Entrenched memories: Jai Koutrae, Shingo Usami

Jack has two needless deaths on his conscience, both plaguing him in the form not just of flashbacks but convincing-looking ghosts who sit in the corner of his bedroom and interrupt his sleep.

Given that the tiny budget ruled out direct competition with the likes of *Gallipoli* (1981), *Broken Sun* is impressively mounted, with production designer Ian Sparke conjuring claustrophobic WWI trenches and a Pacific island jungle, and cinematographer Anthony Jennings varying the locations' colour scheme from gun-metal monochrome to lush greenery – though the dominant colour at Jack's farm is sun-scorched brown. If Haynes and screenwriter Dacre Timbs overdo the nature symbols (former warrior Jack feeding a bottle of milk to a lamb, Kamimura ordering his men to be inspired by the carp's heroic journey upstream), they make potent use of photographs and objects as repositories of memory.

There are occasional rough edges – Jai Koutrae is fine as the younger Jack but never quite convinces as a world-weary middle-aged man (if he was a sergeant in 1916, he'd be at least 50 by 1944), partly thanks to a clearly shaven head unconvincingly substituting for baldness. A more experienced director would also have guarded against the understandable longeurs that arise when two psychologically damaged people attempt to communicate in a meaningful way. But if it ultimately has little to say about war that's

particularly new, it's a sensitive, often moving film that augurs well for Haynes's future, especially if he ever secures a budget to match his evident ambition. **Michael Brooke**

CREDITS

Directed by
Brad Haynes
Produced by
Sasha Huckstepp
Brad Haynes
Screenplay
Dacre Timbs
Story
Brad Haynes
Dacre Timbs
Director of Photography
Anthony Jennings
Editor
Hayley Lake
Military/History Designer
Ian Sparke
Composer/Music Arranged/Produced by
Matteo Zingales

@JACKAFilms
Production Company
JACKAFilms presents
Associate Producers
Corey Lazzarotto
Jai Koutrae
Assistant Director
1st: Corey Lazzarotto
Visual Effects Artist
Darrin Hanley
Special Effects
Brett Murphy
Art Directors
Wendy Morrison
Ian Sparke
Make-up
Old Jack
Amy Morrison
Joanne Bentley
Mother:
Rachel Montgomery
Title Design
Darrin Hanley
Solo Cello
James K. Lee
Sound Designer/ Sound Supervisor
Sasha Zastavnikov
Sound Recordist
Nick Purchasehouse

CAST

Jai Koutrae
Jack
Shingo Usami
Masaru
Kentaro Hara
Shingo
Kuni Hashimoto
Kamimura
Sam O'Dell
Bill
Mark Redpath
German soldier
Rudi Baker
Alan, interpreter

Robin Royce Queree
mailman
Galvin Scott Davis
chaplain
James Bishop
crippled soldier
Ian Sparke
major
Martin Thomas
Daniel
Katie Ditchburn
mother
Keira Sheehy
girl
Angus Stead
young German prisoner
Steven Dodd
Aboriginal man
Taki Abe
young Japanese prisoner
Paul Kartan
lone Australian soldier
Matthew Davidson
patrol soldier 1, NSW
Mark Grentell
patrol soldier 2, NSW
Matthew Olsen
patrol soldier 3, NSW
Brett Murphy
camp guard
Tom Last
Ben Lazzarotto
Mark Lazzarotto
George Lightfoot
Nathan Scholz
Mark Taylor
Steven Thomas
Brad Walsh
Sam White
Australian soldiers
Trent McPherson
Jason Piltz
Adam Preston
Ewen Scholz
German soldiers
Masahiro
Osamu Irie
Ippei Teranishi
Takuya Hisatsune
Ken Matsuura
Takashi Nagata
Japanese POWs

In Colour
[1.78:1]

Distributor
Metrodome Distribution Ltd

8,247 ft +1 frame

Burke & Hare

United Kingdom 2010

Director: John Landis

With Simon Pegg, Andy Serkis, Isla Fisher, Tom Wilkinson

Certificate 15 91m 25s

The real-life story of William Burke and William Hare, Ulster-born grave-robbers turned murderers in 1820s Edinburgh, and eminent surgeon Dr Robert Knox for whom they acquired the bodies, has often attracted filmmakers. This latest version sets out its stall right from the start. "This is a true story," announces an opening title, "except for the parts that are not." And within the first ten minutes we've had a hanging, a leg amputation without anaesthetic (causing the patient's death) and a corpse oozing maggots. Jocular gore is evidently the order of the day – which sets John Landis's film apart from previous screen versions of the events (including 1985's *The Doctor and the Devils*, directed by Freddie Francis from an outline script by Dylan Thomas), all of which played up the horror angle and wasted no sympathy on the notorious pair. Understandably enough, given that most of their 16 victims were vulnerable women and that Hare shopped Burke to save his own neck.

Here, though, we're introduced to Burke and Hare (Simon Pegg and Andy Serkis) as loveable chancers, the Del Boy Trotters of Edinburgh, trying out a snake-oil scam on gullible citizens. They fall into grave-robbing and murder by accident and stick with them out of need or, in Burke's case, for love of the young would-be actress Ginny, whose patron he becomes. The true villains, in classic populist style, are the respectable hypocrites like Dr Knox (Tom Wilkinson) and his rival Dr Monro (Tim Curry) who, along with the rest of their class, close ranks when disclosure threatens. Burke, meanwhile, dies a noble death, sacrificing himself Sydney Carton-style for his beloved and his friends.

Famous-name cameos – Christopher Lee, Bill Bailey, Jenny Agutter, John Woodvine, Stephen Merchant, Paul Whitehouse as an indestructible drunk – stud the film, adding to the sense of a cheery romp. Ronnie Corbett as a pompous militia captain picks up the best of the laughs, deploying his native Edinburgh accent ('murder' becomes trisyllabic) to good effect. Elsewhere Landis tends to plug his jokes. In the Greyfriars graveyard scene an initial shot of Greyfriars Bobby, faithful on his master's tomb, is funny – but then we cut back to the dog three or four times, squashing the humour flat. Likewise Piers Ashworth and Nick Moorcroft's script relies rather too often on the anachronistic 'new word' gag: "I think I'll call them... 'photographs'," says Dr Knox, and Hare's wife Lucky, inventing a respectable profession, hits with delight on the term 'funeral parlour'.

While it's good to see John Landis, after his wilderness years, back on something near form, *Burke & Hare*

SYNOPSIS Central New South Wales, Australia, 1944. Jack lives a solitary existence on a farm, tormented by his failing health and recurring memories of the trenches at Pozières, France, in 1916, some of which manifest themselves in the form of the ghost of fellow soldier Bill.

Masaru, a Japanese prisoner of war being held nearby, escapes with commanding officer Kamimura and fellow soldier Shingo. He stumbles on Jack's farm and is taken captive. Although Jack intends to hand him over to the authorities as soon as possible, Masaru speaks some English, and the two form an uneasily respectful relationship, especially as it becomes clear that they harbour similarly traumatic memories of their respective wars. On an island in the south-west Pacific earlier that year, Masaru witnessed Shingo shooting an Allied soldier dead, while Jack recalls having to abandon the wounded Bill during a mustard-gas attack.

Shingo tracks Masaru down, but is threatened by Jack, who spares his life after his rifle turns out to be empty. Jack remembers stabbing a German prisoner to death after failing to get a satisfactory answer out of him regarding Bill's fate. Believing that his status as a prisoner has brought shame, Shingo commits harakiri and Masaru finishes him off. The next day, the authorities arrive, having already picked up Kamimura. They find Shingo's corpse, and Jack shows them to his barn, but Masaru is nowhere to be seen.

Alone with his memories, Jack sees the ghost of the German prisoner.

SYNOPSIS Edinburgh, 1828. Irishmen William Burke and William Hare are eking out a living selling cheese mould to credulous punters as wonder-cure 'Donegal moss'. Rumbled, they flee for their lives. Hare's drunken wife Lucky tells them their lodger old Donald has died. Drowning his sorrows, Hare learns that corpses are fetching a good price; two rival surgeons, Dr Robert Knox and Dr Alex Monro, are desperate for bodies to dissect. Burke and Hare transport old Donald's body in a barrel to Dr Knox, who pays them £5 and offers the same for any more they bring him. An attempt at grave-robbing is thwarted by the arrival of the Edinburgh militia under Captain McIntosh, but the pair hasten another lodger, old Joseph, to his end.

Celebrating in a tavern, they encounter Ginny Hawkins, a young dancer/prostitute with ambitions as an actress. Burke is smitten with her, and hears her plans to stage an all-female *Macbeth*. Burke and Hare begin targeting random victims; their first two attempts are abortive, but a fat man dies of fright at their approach. They step up their activities, attracting the attention of crime boss McTavish, who demands they pay him half their earnings. For the imminent visit of the king to Edinburgh, a competition is announced for the most beneficial advance in medical science. Knox and Monro intensify their rival efforts; with the help of pioneer French photographer Nicephore, Knox plans a 'map of the human anatomy', requiring two bodies a week.

Burke offers to back Ginny's production. McTavish tells Burke and Hare he plans to take them into partnership; his associates aren't pleased, and McTavish's corpse is soon delivered to Knox. The opening night of Ginny's *Macbeth* is a triumph. McIntosh's suspicions lead him to Knox's laboratory. About to present his work to the king, Knox is forestalled by McIntosh, who seizes the photographs as evidence. Burke and Hare are arrested, along with Ginny and Lucky. Lord Harrington, president of the Royal College of Surgeons, and the city's Lord Provost persuade McIntosh that a trial would damage Edinburgh's reputation, and mollify him by promoting him to colonel. To save the others, Burke confesses. He and Ginny spend the night together before he's hanged. Hare and Lucky open a funeral parlour.

falls a good way short of *An American Werewolf in London* (1981) in terms of wit and invention. And though this is an Ealing production, invoking the memory (as Landis does) of *Kind Hearts and Coronets* and *The Ladykillers* is just asking for trouble. **Philip Kemp**

CREDITS

Directed by
John Landis
Produced by
Barnaby Thompson
Written by
Piers Ashworth
Nick Moorcroft
Director of Photography
John Mathieson
Editor
Mark Everson
Production Designer
Simon Elliott
Music by/Music
Arranged and
Produced by
Joby Talbot

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Production Companies
Entertainment Film Distributors and Ealing Studios present a Fragile film in association with Aegis Film Fund, Prescience and Quickfire Films
In association with Altus Productions
Made with the support of the lottery through the UK Film Council Development Fund
Executive Producers
Nigel Green
James Spring
Tim Smith
Paul Brett
Peter Nichols
James Altherton
Jan Pace
Co-producer
Alexandra Ferguson
Associate Producer
Nichola Martin

Unit Production Manager
Tim Wellspring
Production Co-ordinator
Hannah Collett
Production Accountant
Jon Duncan
Location Manager
Camilla Stephenson
Post-production Supervisor
Linda Deacy
Assistant Directors
1st: Alexander Oakley
2nd: Mark Hopkins
Script Supervisor
Libbie Barr
Casting
Dan Hubbard
Camera Operator
A: Martin Hume
Steadicam Operators
Paul Edwards
Peter Wignall
Gaffer
Alan Martin
Key Grip
David Appleby
Visual Effects
BlueBolt Ltd.
Special Effects Supervisor
Neal Champion
Special Effects
Special Effects GB Ltd
Supervising Art Director
Bill Crutcher
Art Director
Nick Dent
Set Decorator
Annie Gilhooly
Production Buyer
Marshall Aver
Property Master
Peter Hallam
Construction Manager
Steve Bohan
Costume Designer
Deborah Nadoolman
Costume Supervisor

Gordon Harmer
Hair/Make-up Designer
Christine Blundell
Make-up/Hair Artists
Lesla Warriner
Chloe Meddings
Titles Design
Matt Curtis
Additional Music Composed by
Guy Dagul
Ben Foster
Trumpet Solo
Mike Lovatt
Music Orchestrated/Conducted by
Ben Foster
Soundtrack
"Messiah – Oratorio (Halleluiah)" by George Frederic Handel;
"Amazing Grace" – Royal Scots Dragoon

Guards: "I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles)" – The Proclaimers; "Burke's Swing" by Joby Talbot
Production Sound Mixer
John Midgley
Re-recording Mixers
Gareth Bull
Adam Mendez
Supervising Sound Editor
Harry Barnes
Stunt Co-ordinator
Gary Connerly

CAST

Simon Pegg
William Burke
Andy Serkis
William Hare
Isla Fisher
Ginny Hawkins

Tom Wilkinson
Doctor Robert Knox
Jessica Hynes
Lucky
Bill Bailey
hangman
Tim Curry
Dr Alex Monro
Michael Smiley
Patterson
Paul Davis
patient
Christian Brassington
Charles
Gabrielle Downey
Mad Maggie
Stuart McQuarrie
magistrate
Mike Goodenough
aggrieved customer
Robert Fyfe
old Donald
Robert Willox
gravedigger's bouncer
David Schofield
Fergus
David Hayman
Danny McTavish
Ronnie Corbett
Captain Tam McIntosh
Claron Kelly
Private Fox
Reece Shearsmith
Sergeant Mackenzie
Joyce Henderson
Mrs McFie
Pollyanna McIntosh
Mary
Georgia King
Emma
Shelley Longworth
Hannah
Amanda Claire
Nicola
Allan Corduner
Nicephore
Steve Speirs
McMartin's doorman
George Potts
Doctor Lister
Duncan Duff
attendant
Hugh Bonneville
Lord Harrington
Ray Harryhausen
Sir Alan Munroe
Dr John Gaynor
Michael Wilson
Robert Paynter
distinguished doctors
Simon Farnaby
William Wordsworth
Tom Meeten
Samuel Colendage
Paul Whitehouse
gentleman drunk

Michael Winner
gentleman passenger
Tom Urie
heart attack man
Ella Smith
barmaid
Janet Whiteside
old woman
Jenny Agutter
Lucy
Robert Stone
Miss Clarissa Windors
Max Landis
handsome coachman
Chris Obi
John Martin
Patricia Gibson-Howell
Mrs John Martin
Michael Billington
medical student
Stephen Merchant
Hollywood footman
Jacob Edwards
Hollywood courtier
John Woodvine
Lord Provost
Billy Riddoch
rabble rouser
Esme Thompson
Nicephore's girlfriend
Costa-Gavras
Michèle Ray Gavras
Romain Gavras
Emmanuel Hamon
Theo Hamon
French family
Dodger
Greyfriars Bobby
Seamus the Dog
himself

[uncredited]
Christopher Lee
old Joseph

Dolby Digital
In Colour
[2.35:1]

Distributor
Entertainment Film
Distributors Ltd

8,226 ft +15 frames

Catfish

USA 2010

Director: Ariel Schulman, Henry Joost

Certificate 12A 87m 22s

Pick a friend – a Facebook friend or one in the same room as you – and ask them about 'the Facebook film'. They will without doubt assume you mean David Fincher's Oscar-tipped *The Social Network*, which tells the story of the social media site from its origins in a Harvard dorm room in 2003. It's a gripping tale, but one that will tell you little about the nature of Facebook itself – both Fincher and screenwriter Aaron Sorkin boast of never having used the site, while its cast line up to make similar disavowals. An underdog builds an empire based on a bold vision but must count the cost of friendships lost along the way – another dotcom start-up could easily be plugged into this near-mythic template, or equally a newspaper stable.

To understand – or at least get a glimpse of – the strangely unstable reality in which sites such as Facebook invite you to wander, it's *Catfish* you need, not *The Social Network*. Directed by Ariel Schulman and Henry Joost, the documentary focuses on Ariel's brother Nev, a New York photographer who, as the film begins, is opening a package. It contains paintings – copies of Nev's published photographs – whose naive charm is heightened by the fact that the artist, Abby Pierce, is just eight years old. Nev 'friends' Abby, and then her extended family, on Facebook. More paintings arrive, as well as songs recorded for him by Abby's attractive older sister Megan. What began as a document by distance of a young art-world outsider (in contrast to the Schulmans' hip Manhattanite success) becomes one of online romance. But then Nev uncovers a fib and, having decided to tug at this thread by visiting Abby, Megan and their mother Angela in Michigan, finds the fabric of his new social network unravelling.

Catfish's strength lies in its editing. Visually it integrates new online media in a way that many films have tried and failed to do: Google Earth tracks its protagonists' travels, introductions are made using Facebook photo tags, and Google Street View provides external establishing shots. But the way its narrative is created is equally impressive, as *Catfish* takes an unexpected turn and follows the new line to a conclusion of some pathos.

In a documentary about appearance and reality, it is impossible not to question the *vérité* of some scenes: Nev and the directors merge into a single team, with all three appearing on camera and behind it. The temptation to restage certain revelations must have been high, especially given Nev's telegenic comfort as a subject. But such questions need not unsettle the film's central point. It opens with an extreme close-up of pixels on screen, a trembling field of red-green-blue – the implication being, do not miss the wood for the



The beast with five fingers: Andy Serkis



You've been framed: Nev Schulman

← trees, or the screen for the dots. But alongside this scepticism there's a sympathetic understanding of what might motivate online deception, a recognition of the real poignancy of the idealisations and projections that Facebook, and the internet as a whole, can enable. ♦♦ Sam Davies

CREDITS

Directed by
Ariel Schulman
Henry Joost
Produced by
Andrew Jarecki
Marc Smerling
Henry Joost
Ariel Schulman
Cinematography
Henry Joost
Ariel Schulman
Yaniv Schulman

Editor
Zac Stuart-Pontier
@Supermarché, Hit the Ground Running, LLC
Production Companies
Supermarché presents in association with Hit the Ground Running a film by Ariel Schulman & Henry Joost
Co-producer
Zac Stuart-Pontier

Associate Producer
Colin Wilhm
Additional Cinematography
Nick Bentgen
Animation
Andrew Zuchero
Paintings by
Angela Wesselman-Pierce
Re-recording Mixer/Supervising Sound Editor
Colt Anderson

WITH

Megan Faccio
Seth Nylander
Kyle Pierce
Ben Pierce
Ryan Iverson
Angela Wesselman-Pierce
Yaniv 'Nev' Schulman

Sophia Hobbins
Sarah Ann Iverson
Joelle Brookes
Josh Brookes
Alex Pierce

In Colour
[1.78:1]

Distributor
Momentum Pictures

7.863 ft -0 frames

Chatroom

United Kingdom 2010

Director: Hideo Nakata

With Aaron Johnson, Imogen Poots, Matthew Beard, Hannah Murray

Certificate 15 97m 22s

The Social Network showed how online communities can express dysfunctional, destructive and self-destructive personalities. *Chatroom* takes on the same theme but in a manner that could kindly be called eccentric – though few viewers will be so kind. Although it aims to be a disturbing thriller, *Chatroom* misses out what could have been its big twist: if only it could have left its director's name a secret until the end titles! For this stagey, low-budget British melodrama, largely revolving around London's Camden Lock and a very low-rent vision of cyberspace, was made by Hideo Nakata, the world-famous director of the Japanese horror film *Ringu* (1997).

Chatroom is an old-school Awful Social Warning, in which several strangers meet in an online chatroom to be manipulated in increasingly dastardly ways by the room's seductive sociopath founder (Aaron Johnson). One of the film's central devices is to visualise the internet not as some *Tron*-like neon ether but rather as a peeling, putrescent green corridor with websites as virtual 'rooms' in which strangers chat, party, have tacky sex or mob the weak to suicide. Unsurprisingly, *Chatroom* is based on a stage play (by *Hunger's* Enda Walsh).

It's possible to imagine the crude metaphor working on screen in the hands of, for example, Michel Gondry, but Nakata botches the film. One is quickly reduced to wondering which note rings the wrongest – perhaps the cringingly facile caricature of J.K. Rowling as the villain's ruffled upper-crust mother (Megan Dodds), or the poor little posh supermodel (Imogen Poots) who falls for his bad-lad charms. The dialogue, much of it about generation gaps as seen from the perspective of spoiled whiney youngsters, is painfully tinny and earnestly overamped. Nakata's drama of false perceptions never feels real, though the attractive young cast try gamely for callow enthusiasm and are largely excused by their material.

The internet metaphor falls apart fast – why do all the characters appear more or less the same online as they do when they finally meet in real life? In the year of *Inception*, we constantly expect the ostensibly 'real' world in the film to be deconstructed into another net fantasy, but that option is unexplored. There are few obvious signs of Nakata's involvement, other than a functional atonal score by *Ringu's* composer Kawai Kenji, a brief image of a Japanese girl killing herself on webcam, and an increasing emphasis on 'forbidden' images. (There was a much reported wave of internet suicide clubs in Japan a few years ago, as brilliantly dramatised in a macabre episode of Kon Satoshi's TV anime *Paranoia Agent*.)

Nakata's *Vertigo*-style 1999 thriller *Chaos* was built mostly from implausible twists, suggesting a wish to wrongfoot audiences who knew him for *Ringu*. Perhaps that's the best explanation as to why he turned to *Chatroom*. Lovers of transnational curios may find its inept earnestness strangely enjoyable, but *Chatroom* is far duller than many real-life online stories. The British one to beat is still that of a 14-year-old schoolboy who, in the words of the *Belfast Telegraph*, "posed as a female secret service spy in an internet chatroom to try to persuade a friend to murder him". ♦♦ Andrew Osmond

CREDITS

Directed by
Hideo Nakata
Produced by
Laura Hastings-Smith
Alison Owen
Paul Trijbits
Written by
Enda Walsh
based on his play
Director of Photography
Benoit Delhomme
Film Editor
Masahiro Hirakubo
Production Designer
Jon Henson
Composer
Kenji Kawai

©Ruby Films (Chatroom) Ltd., Channel Four Television Corporation, UK Film Council and Notting Hill Films Limited
Production Companies
Film 4, UK Film Council and West End Films present in association with Molinare and

Notting Hill Films a Ruby Films production
A Hideo Nakata film
Executive Producers
Sharon Harel
Katherine Butler
Eve Schoukroun
Maya Amselem
Mark Foligno
Tania Reichert-Facilides
Line Producer
Andrew Litvin
Associate Producers
Faye Ward
Hannah Farrell
Production Co-ordinator
Livia Burton
Production Accountant
Vincent O'Toole
Location Manager
Helene Lenszner
Post-production Supervisor
Alistair Hopkins
Assistant Directors
1st: Marco Ciglia
2nd: Matthew Hanson
Script Supervisor
Kriss Landin
Casting Director
Nina Gold

SYNOPSIS The setting is present-day London, and also a series of stylised corridors and rooms which serve as metaphors for the internet. A youth, William, sets up a new chatroom called 'Chelsea Teens!'. He is joined by Mo, Eva, Emily and Jim, who quickly open up about their personal issues.

Emily is encouraged to shake up her complacent parents, and begins vandalising their property at night. Seventeen-year-old Mo confides in William about his guilty attraction to his friend's pre-teen sister. William encourages Mo to tell his friend, leading to a punch-up. Jim talks to the group about how his father abandoned him as a child. William encourages him to come off his medication, and privately entices him towards suicide-themed websites. William stays quiet about his own background as the resentful son of a bestselling children's author. He starts an online relationship with Eva, who's an unhappy photo-model. William vandalises the website of Eva's rival.

Eva realises that William is trying to make Jim kill himself. William leaves a gun for Jim to shoot himself at London Zoo, where his father abandoned him. When that plan fails, William chases Jim to Camden Lock, with Eva, Emily and Mo in pursuit. The police arrive and corner William next to a railway line; he deliberately falls under an oncoming train.

Steadicam Operator
Derek Walker

Gaffer
Julian White

Key Grip
Robert Barlow

Animation Directed/Designed by
Daniel Stirrup

Animation Producer
Tom Aizlewood

Animation Art Director
Robin Crowley

Animation Director of Photography
Matthew James Day

Animation Modeller
Collette Pidgeon

Special Effects Supervisor
Neal Champion

Special Effects (GB) Ltd
Supervising Art Director
Patrick Rolfe

Art Director
Gareth Cousins

Set Decorator
Robert Wischhusen-Hayes

Production Buyer
Prue Howard

Prop Master
Craig Cheeseman

Construction Manager
Dan Crandon

Costume Designer
Julian Day

Wardrobe Supervisor
Jane Marcantonio

Hair/Make-up Designer
Marese Langan

Make-up Artist
Kate Warwick-Oliver

Music Supervisor
Matt Biffa

Soundtrack
"Disconnect" – Plastikman; "Animal (Mark Ronson Remix)" – Mike Snow; "Wash in the Rain" – The Bees;

"Energy and Movement"; "Make It Take It" – Amanda Blank; "Blue Skies" – Noah and the Whale; "Stay the Same" – autoKratz; "Cruel Intentions" – Simian Mobile Disco; "Prelude No.11 in F (The Well-Tempered Clavier – 2nd Book BWV 880)" by Johann Sebastian Bach – The Swingle Singers; "Karen" – Chew Lips; "VCR" – The XX; "Turning the Mind" – Maps; "Gravity's Rainbow (Soulwax Remix)" – The Klaxons; "Ninth Symphony Second Movement" by Ludwig van Beethoven – Nicolaus Esterházy Sinfonia; "Bubble" – Riva Starr; "Starry Eyed (Jakob Remix)" – Ellie Goulding; "The Flower Duet" from "Lakmé" by Léo Delibes – Adriana Kohutkova, Denisa Slepkovska, the Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra; "Sommersault" – Sky Larkin; "My Name Is Tallulah" by Paul Williams – Jodie Foster; "Left My Heart in Tokyo (Radio Edit)" – Mini Viva; "Seven Day Smile" – Doves; Jane Weaver; "Better Late Than Never" – Tiffany Page; "8000" – Proxy

Music Consultants
Seb Chew

Sound Designer
Paul Davies

Production Sound Mixer
David Lascelles

Sound Re-recording Mixer
Richard Davey

Supervising Sound Editor
Paul Davies

Stunt Co-ordinator
James O'Dee

CAST

Aaron Johnson
William

Imogen Poots
Eva

Matthew Beard
Jim

Hannah Murray
Emily

Daniel Kaluuya
Mo

Megan Dodds
Grace

Michelle Fairley
Rosie

Nicholas Gleave
Paul

Jacob Anderson
Si

Tuppence Middleton
Candy

Ophelia Lovibond
Charlotte

Richard Madden
Ripley

Matthew Ashforde
Jim's father

Dorothy Atkinson
Emily's mother

Alex Blake
man on mobile phone

Noa Bodner
woman at book launch

Amanda Boxer
Mrs Sinclair

Lorraine Cheshire
Yorkshire housewife

Matthew Fenton
young Jim

Elarica Gallacher
Ushi

Ross Gurney-Randall
large Camden man

Gerald Home
Tony Layton

Karin Ichihashi
Japanese girl

Abigail Leonard
gymnastics coach

James Lester
young 'Dorfil' boy

Rebecca McLintock
Keisha

Jodie Miller
Tony Layton as girl

Claudio Moniz
Brazilian bully 4

Alex Peck
William as girl

Fabio Pedrosa
Brazilian bully 3

Mary Roscoe
psychiatrist

Scarlett Sabet
Betsy

Simon Silva
Brazilian bully 1

Michael Smart
Brazilian bully 2

Emily Spires
Laura

Oliver Swainston
Brazilian boy

Dolby Digital
Colour by
DeLuxe
[1.85:1]

Distributor
Revolver Entertainment

8,762 ft +5 frames

Publicity title
Ch@troom



Stop making sense: Richard E. Grant, Laura Fraser

Cuckoo

Director: Richard Bracewell
With Richard E. Grant, Laura Fraser, Adam Fenton, Tamsin Greig

Laura Fraser is an actress who always manages to look as if her characters are thinking through their actions, and her air of intensifying befuddlement is understandable in this poorly plotted micro-budget British offering. She plays a vulnerable young woman who's desperately upset by the voices she hears in her flat while her clubbing boyfriend is away at nights, driven indeed to the verge of a breakdown. Presumably anyone in the audience with even the dimmest memory of Roman Polanski's *Repulsion* (1965) is meant to feel sympathetic, but at a basic story level there's a credibility issue here. Fraser's nervy Polly lives in a mansion block, so surely she's used to hearing the neighbours? We get repeated shots of the stairwell and entrance, but never see anyone else living there – which is typical of a film that affects a would-be spooky and atmospherically hermetic quality but doesn't convince in its detail.

Richard E. Grant (cast against type, and rather stiff) is the sinisterly over-protective cardiology professor who delivers a lengthy monologue on how perception is a matter of our brain processing sensory inputs and therefore open to question when the mind starts to create its own alternate

reality. All of which is moderately fascinating but not really borne out in writer-director Richard Bracewell's formal approach, which switches perspectives and attempts to offer an omniscient neutrality – possibly in the hope that intercutting will whip up some suspense. Sadly, growing incredulity proves the order of the day.

Occasionally, there's just a hint of the unsettling nuance the film is obviously after (a non-sequitur encounter with an embittered old school chum is an awkward one-off), and Andrew Hewitt's doomy string-laden score surely deserves a more effective context than this. Ultimately, however, Bracewell just can't get away with feigning moody enigma when his narrative relies on such unlikely occurrences as the sister and boyfriend of the protagonist carrying on an affair in a conveniently empty and unlocked upstairs flat... even after edgy Polly has been complaining of hearing voices in the building! Even worse is to come with the climactic reveal involving a technologically absurd bit of undercover audio recording; but it's the final emotional switchback, as Fraser lurches from wide-eyed nervous wreck to spontaneous killer, that makes no sense at all. Much as one would like to support the British independent sector, this simply doesn't cut the mustard.

♦♦ **Trevor Johnston**

Credits for this film were unavailable at the time of going to press and will be published in the February issue

SYNOPSIS UK, present day. Cardiology researcher Polly is anxious about a forthcoming job interview, and worried by voices she hears in the flat she shares with boyfriend Chapman – a club musician often away at nights. Polly's sister Jimi offers support, though she is in fact having an affair with Chapman. Julius, a professor at Polly's hospital department, is taking a seemingly personal interest by keeping Polly's flat under surveillance. Polly eventually traces the sounds to the empty flat upstairs, but just misses Jimi and Chapman in flagrante. Julius visits Polly's flat at Jimi's behest, and offers some sleeping pills. Chapman's relationship with Jimi grows increasingly strained; when he returns to the flat one night, Polly attacks him, convinced he's been tormenting her. Jimi joins in to keep the affair a secret. Polly is offered the new job. She visits Julius to tell him that she's taking a break with Jimi, whereupon Julius reveals his secret recordings (from a transmitter inside the pill bottle) of Jimi and Chapman's liaison and the sisters attacking Chapman. It becomes clear that Chapman was killed in the attack. Polly walks away, slaps the waiting Jimi, then offers her the hand of forgiveness.



Problem boys: Matthew Beard, Aaron Johnson

Due Date

USA 2010

Director: Todd Phillips

With Robert Downey Jr, Zach Galifianakis, Michelle Monaghan

Certificate 15 95m 6s

In a film stuffed with arch little in-jokes, the juiciest comes when frustrated control freak Peter (Robert Downey Jr) challenges Hollywood wannabe Ethan (Zach Galifianakis) to ad-lib something easy, like a team pep-talk scene from a baseball movie. Ethan – whose aspirations are based on his love of TV sitcoms – is nonplussed. “That would never even be a movie,” he scoffs. “Are you kidding? They make that movie every two years!” Peter replies.

Of course, while it's probably more like a five-year cycle for the good old sporting-underdog paradigm, this film's storyline – the odd-couple road-trip comedy – really does come round with clockwork predictability. What makes Todd Phillips's contribution to the genre so successful, and so hilarious, is his determination to take each grindingly predictable plot cliché by the horns, flip it over on its back and make it scream for mercy.

Take the central personality mismatch that underlies all such narratives: here, it's not just a clash between a prissy guy and a messy guy, it's a titanic battle between a violently bad-tempered stress addict who thinks nothing of punching small children, and a psychotically clingy narcissist who will listen to your most traumatic childhood memory and then laugh right in your face. Naturally, tradition dictates that they will both grow and learn from the experience of being thrown together, but there are several points in the story when it seems extremely unlikely that they will live long enough to do so, or that Peter's marriage will withstand his bloody-minded determination to see the birth of his first child, whose imminent arrival gives the film its title and its ticking-clock urgency. Whether you care enough to root for their survival is touch and go in itself: our initial sympathy for Peter is soon whisked out from under our feet, while the pathos of Ethan's fatal inability to cope with life has to struggle against the fact that he is the most unbelievably irritating character ever to step out of a taxi in a movie's opening scene. Any token learning and growing that takes place by the closing credits is secondary to the audience's amazement at the characters' sheer survival in the face of brutal odds.

That we worry about them at all is down to the sterling work of Downey and Galifianakis, who embrace their characters' egregious quirks with gleeful tenacity and strain every sinew to make us believe they are human beings capable of redemption. And they're funny: Ethan may have all the best cringe-moments, but Downey has some choice lines and clearly enjoys taking Peter down to the barrel-scraping depths that he and we remember from Downey's own bad-boy days, reducing him from a suit-wearing top dog to a



Flirting with disaster: Robert Downey Jr, Zach Galifianakis

stoned, bedraggled loser with a mug-shot stare. It's the kind of knowing complicity between filmmakers and popcorn-munchers that makes *Due Date* entirely heartless but deliciously tart. This is a big, brash, overblown whoop-and-holler of a film, instantly forgettable, but thoroughly enjoyable while it lasts. **♥ Lisa Mullen**

CREDITS

Directed by
Todd Phillips
Produced by
Todd Phillips
Dan Goldberg
Screenplay
Alan R. Cohen
Alan Freedland
Adam Szykiel
Todd Phillips
Story
Alan R. Cohen
Alan Freedland
Director of Photography
Lawrence Sher
Edited by
Debra Neil-Fisher
Production Designer
Bill Brzeski
Music
Christophe Beck

©Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. and Legendary Pictures
Production Companies
Warner Bros. Pictures presents in association with Legendary Pictures a Green Hat Films production
A Todd Phillips movie
Made with the assistance of the Georgia Film, Music & Digital Entertainment Office, a division of the Georgia Department of Economic Development
Executive Producers
Thomas Tull
Susan Downey
Scott Rudin
Co-producers
David Wiltz
Jeffrey Wetzel
Associate Producer
Joseph Garner
Unit Production Manager
David Wiltz
Production Supervisors
Candice Campos
2nd Unit:

Mika Saito
Atlanta:
Don J. Hug
Production Co-ordinators
Mark Swenson
2nd Unit:
Crystal McAlerney
Atlanta:
Meredith Humbricht
Accountant
Mary Sunshine
Location Managers
Ken Lavet
Michael Burmeister
2nd Unit:
Mada Morgan
New Mexico:
Michael Dellheim
Atlanta:
John Findley
Post-production Supervisor
Susan E. Novick
2nd Unit Director
Allan Graf
Assistant Directors
1st: Jeffrey J.P. Wetzel
2nd: Paul B. Schneider
2nd Unit
1st: Courtenay Miles
2nd: William Purple
Script Supervisors
Jeanne M. Byrd
2nd Unit:
Trudy Ramirez
Casting
Juel Bestrop
Seth Yanklewitz
New Mexico:
Jo Edna Boldin
Aerial Directors of Photography
David Nowell
New Mexico:
Phil Pastuhov
Atlanta:
David Norris
Camera Operators
A: Daniel Gold
B: Tommy Lohmann
2nd Unit
A: Leo Napolitano
B: Robert Scott
Steadicam Operator
Tommy Lohmann

Chief Lighting Technicians
Jarred Waldron
2nd Unit:
James Tomaro
Key Grips
Sean Patrick Crowell
2nd Unit:
Paul Perkins
Visual Effects Supervisor
Marc Kolbe
Visual Effects by
DigiScope
Method
Kolbeco
Special Effects Supervisor
Yves de Bono
Additional Editor
David S. Clark
Supervising Art Director
Shepherd Frankel
Art Directors
Desma Murphy
Atlanta:
Clint Wallace
Set Decorator
Danielle Berman
Property Masters
Mychael Bates
2nd Unit:
Dave Baumann
Road Unit:
Lawrence Tolle
Construction Co-ordinator
John Samson
Costumes Designed by
Louise Mingenbach
Costume Supervisor
Mitchell Kenney

Make-up Department Heads
Janeen Schreyer
2nd Unit:
Blair Leonard
Key Make-up Artist
Keith Sayer
Hair Department Heads
Jennifer Bell
2nd Unit:
Gunnar Swanson
Key Hair Stylist
Merrill A. Anderson
Main Titles Designed by
Prologue Films
End Titles
Scarlet Letters
Music Supervisors
Randall Poster
George Drakoulis
Soundtrack
"Hold On I'm Comin'" – Sam & Dave; "People Are Crazy" – Billy Currington; "Yankee Doodle House"; "The White Room" – Cream; "New Moon Rising" – Wolfmother; "Closing Time" – Danni McBride; "Mykonos" – Fleet Foxes; "This Is Why I'm Hot" – MIMS, contains the sample "Walk with Me" – The ARC Choir; "Old Man (Live at Massey Hall)" – Neil Young; "Hey You" – Pink Floyd; "Sweet Jane" – Cowboy Junkies; "Is There a Ghost" – Band of

Horses; "Amazing Grace" – Rod Stewart; Sam Mitchell; "Check Ya Self 2010" – Ice Cube featuring Chuck D, featuring samples from "Grab This Thing" – The Mar-Keys; "Theme from Two and a Half Men" by Grant Geissman; Lee Aronson; Chuck Lorre
Sound Design
Cameron Frankley
Sound Mixer
José Antonio García
Re-recording Mixers
Ron Bartlett
D.M. Hemphill
Supervising Sound Editor
Cameron Frankley
Stunt Co-ordinator
Allan Graf

CAST

Robert Downey Jr
Peter Highman
Zach Galifianakis
Ethan Tremblay
Michelle Monaghan
Sarah Highman
Juliette Lewis
Heidi
Jamie Foxx
Darryl
Danny McBride
Lonnie
RZA
airport screener
Matt Walsh
TSA agent
Brody Stevens
limo driver
Jakob Ulrich
Patrick
Naila Ulrich
Alex
Todd Phillips
Barry
Bobby Tisdale
Carl
Sharon Morris
airport X-ray
Nathalie Fay
Emily Wagner
flight attendants
Steven M. Gagnon
air marshal
Paul Renteria
border guard
Marco Rodriguez
federal agent
Mimi Kennedy
Sarah's mom
Tymberlee Hill
new mother
Keegan-Michael Key
new father
Aaron Lustig
Dr Greene
Jon Cryer
Alan Harper
Charlie Sheen
Charlie Harper
Dolby Digital/DTS/SDSS
In Colour
Prints by
Technicolor
[2.35:1]
Distributor
Warner Bros.
Entertainment UK Ltd
8,559 ft +4 frames

SYNOPSIS Atlanta, the present. Peter, an uptight businessman whose wife is about to give birth to their first child, arrives at the airport to catch a flight home to Los Angeles. His taxi is involved in an accident with a cab containing would-be actor and walking disaster-magnet Ethan, who is also en route to LA. The two men accidentally swap bags, and then Ethan involves Peter in a security alert, which leads to them both being placed on a no-fly list. With no money or ID, Peter is forced to accept a lift from Ethan and his dog.

As they make their way across country, Peter is increasingly enraged by his travelling companion's childishness, carelessness and monstrous self-regard. He decides to steal Ethan's car and leave him at a service station, only returning when he realises he has inadvertently taken Ethan's father's ashes, which Ethan plans to scatter at the Grand Canyon. Ethan, meanwhile, finds Peter surly and peevish, and discovers he has a violent temper: Peter punches a small child, and is badly beaten in a fight with a disabled war veteran. Peter is hospitalised after Ethan falls asleep at the wheel and flips the car. Ethan then gets Peter arrested at the Mexican border, only to hijack the border guards' trailer with Peter inside it – a rescue that earns Peter's grudging gratitude and respect.

The pair arrive in LA just in time for the birth. Peter's life is restored to normal and Ethan achieves his dream of appearing in his favourite TV sitcom.

Easier with Practice

USA 2009

Director: Kyle Patrick Alvarez
With Brian Geraghty, Kel O'Neill, Marguerite Moreau, Jeanette Brox

Self-published writer Davy is at first bemused when his motel phone rings and he finds himself speaking to the mysterious 'Nicole'. Moments later, however, sensing a window of opportunity, he responds to her unexpected sexual come-on and is nervously jerking off while the receivers burn hot with sex-talk so vivid it earned Kyle Patrick Alvarez's debut feature an NC-17 rating. The camera stays on leading man Brian Geraghty as he runs through the gamut of emotions in a vivid ten-minute take. Genitalia are kept discreetly below the frame-line but otherwise this is courageously exposed stuff, delineating the sort of loneliness, frustration and raw need for sexual contact that drives the character to accept such comfort from strangers. It's the sort of toe-curling set piece which, in other hands, might have been the punchline in a gross-out comedy, yet while the scene is ridiculous, the joint efforts of filmmaker and performer also make it poignant, allowing us to intuit the insecurities and emotional needs leading to such circumstances.

As Davy and 'Nicole' spend more phone time together – mirroring the experiences of *GQ* writer Davy Rothbart, whose autobiographical article Alvarez has adapted for the screenplay – it swiftly becomes apparent that it's more than just a masturbation-aid for both of them. The talk turns to confessions and confidences. Davy's keen to meet, 'Nicole' slightly evasive. The ensuing will-they-won't-they intrigue helps Alvarez keep the plot in motion, but it's also clear that getting the sex out of the way first allows Davy to feel at ease with 'Nicole' in a way that's not quite the case once he returns home and resumes dating the surprisingly supportive Samantha (Marguerite Moreau, delivering as much warmth and understanding as her nervy love interest has any right to expect). What's particularly strong about the writing here is that it takes time to reveal the fundamentals of Davy's off-kilter psyche, giving the viewer a sense of novelistic character depth – though Alvarez also takes pains to outline his protagonist's sensitivity and fundamental decency, making us share Samantha's instinct that it's going to be worth the while digging beneath that anxiously defensive (if boyishly handsome) outer shell.

Alvarez certainly explores the murkiest corners of the masculine psyche, throwing light on what might be termed erectile dysfunction of the mind, since Davy is so perturbed by the demands of physical intimacy that he flees tearfully from Samantha's embrace in another unflinching extended single take. For a first feature, *Easier with Practice* undoubtedly showcases Alvarez's keen emotional

intelligence as a writer, and his ability to provide a context for the actors to give their best. That said, it also suggests that Alvarez hasn't really found his directorial voice yet, for although the film touches on some very raw feelings, it packages them in a rather soothingly familiar indie-sector aesthetic: fey strummed guitars and off-hand vocal harmonies intrude to set the tone of the viewer's response and keep the montages on track. The placement of figures in wide-shot interiors affects a studied Edward Hopper-ish anomie, while the road-trip landscapes are deployed for slightly contrived contrast with the otherwise intimate subject-matter. The material remains effective yet one feels that the movie is hedging its bets, perhaps worried lest otherwise it will prove too tough for acceptance.

But there's enough promise here to make one impatient to see what Alvarez does next. If he's able to find a celluloid form for his insights, he'll be a name to conjure with – even if he also needs to get to grips with the fine line between an idea that's thematically rich and one that can be integrated dramatically. There's no doubt here, for instance, that Davy's long-anticipated encounter with 'Nicole' broadens the story's cultural and thematic scope – and again satisfyingly puts the actors through their paces – yet arguably it does so at the cost of a certain narrative credibility. Does filmmaking get easier with practice? In Alvarez's case, one hopes so. ➡ **Trevor Johnston**

CREDITS

Directed by
Kyle Patrick Alvarez
Produced by
Cookie Carosella
Producer
Kyle Patrick Alvarez
Written by
Kyle Patrick Alvarez
Based on the true story
by Davy Rothbart

Director of Photography
David Morrison
Editor
Fernando Collins
Production Designer
Brooke Peters

©EWP, LLC
Co-producer
David Melito

SYNOPSIS Present day. Part-time writer Davy Mitchell is touring college towns in Middle America, giving readings of his self-published short stories. His more socially confident brother Sean is along for the ride and the girls. Davy answers a call in his motel room and, quite at random, has phone sex with 'Nicole', in what becomes a regular routine. Their conversations move beyond sexual gratification towards emotional intimacy, but 'Nicole' resists Davy's suggestion that they should meet.

Returning home, Davy goes back to temping and has a somewhat edgy date with Samantha, after which his mounting frustration causes him to hang up on 'Nicole' – who subsequently stops calling. Sean embarrasses Davy by letting slip about his telephone liaison, but this prompts Samantha to declare her affections. However, Davy is so stressed by the demands of physical contact that he holes up at home for the next month.

'Nicole' finally calls: she's sorted things out with her boyfriend Aaron, so the meeting is on. Davy travels to New Mexico, and is shocked to discover that 'Nicole' is actually a young gay black man named Aaron. As they talk, Davy recognises a fellow lost soul. They hug, then Aaron departs.

Production Co-ordinators
Janie Elliot
Marissa M. Gonzales
Production Accountant
Andrew Grey Johnson
Location Manager
Marcus Montano
Post-production Supervisor
Alfonso Delgado
Assistant Directors
1st: Michael Breines
2nd: Joe Moore
Script Supervisor
Gregory Doucette
Casting
Nicole Arbusto
Joy Dickson
Additional Photography
Bradley Stonesler
Steadicam Operator
Beau Chaput
Gaffer
Leonard E. Hoffman
Key Grip
Kenneth Colbentz
Art Director
Gary Barbosa
Property Master
Brian Wenrich
Costume Designer
Tom Solun
Wardrobe Supervisor
Gypsy Raven Marie
Key Make-up Artist
Bonnie Masoner

Hair
Denise Barbosa
Additional Music
Greg Chun
Music Supervisors
Marguerite Phillips
Colin Wyatt
Soundtrack
"Castle Time" – Chris Gameau; "Safety Bricks" – Broken Social Scene Presents: Kevin Drew; "Youth on My Side"; "Your Cover" – Emily Easterly; "Opportunistic" – Source Victoria; "Art Isn't Real" – Deer Tick; "On a Neck, on a Spit" – Grizzly Bear; "When We Go, How We Go, Pt. 1" – Rock Plaza Central; "Lift Me Up" – Saturday Looks Good to Me; "Carpetbaggers" – Harlem Shakes; "The Start of Something" – Votrot; "The Sediment" – Palaxy Tracks; "Darlin' Song" – The Watson Twins; "Ghost in the Gutter" – My Latest Novel; "Oh Mandy" – The Spinto Band; "Lost Swedish Pen Pals" – Julian Nation; "Ain't Gonna Take It"; "No End in Sight"; "Tell Me It's True" – Robert J. Walsh.

Ronn L. Chick, Dennis Winslow; "Cause I'm Down" – Clair Marlo (Baker), Alexander Baker; "Still Falling" – Wayne Perry, Jerry Marcum; "She Loved the Devil" – Wayne Perry, Jerry Marcum, David Cole; "Hold Hands and Fight" – The Rosebuds
Sound Mixers
Zac Sneesby
Bayard Carey
Ian Thompson
Re-recording Mixers
Peter S. Reale
Todd Morrissey
Supervising Sound Editor
Jeffrey Kaplan

Roy Costley
motel manager
Kathryn Aselton
Nicole
Allison Hensel
bartender
Gloria Alvarez
bitchy boss
Emelle O'Hara
crying girl
Sharon Van Ivan
concierge
Tracey Horsely
Fairweather's hostess
Molly Weber
old woman
Lauren Petzke
blonde woman
Danielle Lozeau
waitress

In Colour
[1.85:1]

Distributor
Axiom Films Limited

CAST

Brian Geraghty
Davy Mitchell
Kel O'Neill
Sean Mitchell
Marguerite Moreau
Samantha
Jeanette Brox
Sarah
Jenna Gavigan
Josie
Eugene Byrd
Aaron
Lance Capaldi
book store owner



Heavy breather: Brian Geraghty

Enemies of the People

United Kingdom/
Cambodia/USA 2009
Directors: Rob Lemkin,
Thet Sambath

If one were to watch *Enemies of the People* with no subtitles and muted soundtrack, one could easily get the impression of a tranquil, reflective film about an old man looking back on his life while enjoying retirement with his family and visiting friends. Aside from a few snippets of archive film and a practical demonstration by one of the 'friends' about what he used to do for a living, there is little visual indication that this film is the Cambodian equivalent of *Shoah*, and often just as powerful.

For the old man is Nuon Chea, Pol Pot's 'Brother Number Two' and the Khmer Rouge's chief ideologist; his visitors Khoun and Suon are former footsoldiers who helped carry out the slaughter of up to two million people in Cambodia's Killing Fields between 1975 and 1979; and his interviewer is investigative journalist Thet Sambath, who lost three family members to the Khmer Rouge – information withheld from his interviewee for several years in order to gain his trust. The situation is directly analogous to a hypothetical descendant of Holocaust victims tracking down and interviewing Heinrich Himmler in a secluded rural part of Germany some time in the 1970s, and just as uncomfortably riveting.

Sambath's major scoop is that he finally persuades the old man to accept ultimate responsibility for the killings on camera, and indeed apologise to him personally for the loss of his family. But Nuon Chea remains unrepentant about the underlying ideology, constantly resorts to familiar euphemisms about 'solving problems' and 'stopping the rot from spreading' and ultimately blaming US imperialism. When shown footage of Saddam Hussein's hanging in 2006, he expresses sorrow over the death of a fellow patriot, recognising a kindred spirit.

Although securing the interview was a coup in itself, little that Nuon Chea says is essentially surprising, and the film's real meat lies in the interviews with those directly involved in the actual killings. They invariably adopt a Nuremberg-style 'only obeying orders' defence – though some later express concern about how this might affect reincarnation chances after their own deaths, in a Buddhist variant on

Dostoyevskian guilt. Their collective testimony about the physical logistics of slaughtering vast numbers of men, women and children with only the most basic tools (modifying their technique when their arms got tired) is rendered increasingly horrifying by the gradual accretion of detail – decomposing corpses made the surrounding water bubble as though boiling, while the killers developed a taste for human gall as a remedy for dengue fever. The interviews are often conducted at or near the actual sites of the killings, and a female passer-by says that while she'll bathe in the water of the paddy fields, she won't ever drink it.

Given the film's subject, the intensely personal nature and painstaking length of the decade-long investigation, and the obvious risks undertaken by Sambath and co-director Rob Lemkin, it seems churlish to nitpick about occasional structural and contextual infelicities and the frustrating way that Sambath's response to a genuine revelation is to show it again through the distancing medium of an editing suite, reflect on its significance and then change the subject instead of continuing the same line of questioning. But the film's historical value is already undeniable, and may be more far-reaching still, as Sambath's interviews have been donated to the UN-backed Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia as evidence in Nuon Chea's forthcoming trial for crimes against humanity. The fact that he is only the second senior Khmer Rouge figure to be called to account in court merely underscores the importance of Sambath's work. ➔ **Michael Brooke**

CREDITS

Directed by
Rob Lemkin
Thet Sambath
Produced by
Rob Lemkin
Thet Sambath
Written by
Rob Lemkin
Thet Sambath
Edited by
Rob Lemkin
Thet Sambath
Music
Daniel Pemberton

©Old Street Films/Thet Sambath
Production Companies
An Old Street Films/
Thet Sambath
production
Supported by grants
from and made in
association with
Sundance
Documentary Film
Program, Gucci Tribeca
Documentary Fund, EC

MEDIA Programme,
CBA-DFID Broadcast
Media Scheme, Screen
South, RIFE Lottery
Funding
Executive Producer
Sandra Whiphram
Associate Producers
Justin Temple
for Screen South:
Jo Nolan
Miranda Robinson
Creative Consultants
David Charap
Jack Gold
Nona Anderson
Dubbing Mixer
Alan Snelling

WITH

Thet Sambath
Nuon Chea
Khoun
Suon

In Colour/Black and
White
[L85.1]
Part-subtitled

Distributor
Dogwoof Pictures



Who's the daddy?: Ray Winstone

Fathers of Girls

United Kingdom 2010
Directors: Karl Howman,
Ethem Çetintas
With Ray Winstone, Chloe Howman,
Glen Murphy, Lois Winstone
Certificate 15 76m Os

Fathers of Girls: it would make a lovely PhD title, wouldn't it? From *Broken Blossoms* through *Chinatown* to, in the last few years alone, films as varied as Claire Denis's *35 Shots of Rum*, Heitor Dhalia's *Adrift* and the Russo brothers' *You, Me and Dupree*, the history of cinema is rife with daughters devoted and delinquent, dads doting and domineering. Throughout, the theme of incest ranges from the explicitly stated to the barely implied, but it's almost always lurking in the shadows.

The tagline of Karl Howman and Ethem Çetintas's film runs, "One man's daughter is another man's lover" – a maxim Howman takes more literally than most by casting his own daughter as the love interest of star/executive producer Ray Winstone, while Winstone's little Electra, Helen, is played by his real-life daughter Lois. Here, incest is more of a whisper than a shout, as widower Frank Horner, shellshocked by the loss of his only

daughter and the revelation that in life she may not have been the little princess he thought, takes her best friend Emma to his bed. Nonetheless, with Helen absent from the action in all but flashback, Emma serves for both Frank and the audience as a Hitchcockian ersatz, the knowable woman as opposed to the forever mysterious dearly departed. And while he doesn't go so far as to remake her in Helen's image, Frank showers Emma with his daughter's possessions and prompts her to re-enact familiar rituals of tea-making and table-laying. Their relationship is finally consummated after he hears her repeat his dead daughter's final words: "You're the best daddy in the world!" Emma bellows over her shoulder to her mobster father Tommy as she, like Helen before her, drives off into the arms of another man.

It's unclear whether this sinister subtext is intentional, but seen otherwise as a straightforward study of parental loss, the film falls far short of the subtlety of, for example, Rachid Bouchareb's similarly low-budget *London River*, another tale of two children, two parents and the fundamental unknowability of our offspring. Indeed to some extent *Fathers of Girls* struggles from the outset, let down by a picturesque, provincial setting, plinky piano score and a general sense of the pedestrian which calls to mind Sunday-night TV dramas. It's further hampered by clunky dialogue

SYNOPSIS Wiltshire, the present. Widowed solicitor Frank Horner's only daughter Helen, an art student, is found dead of a drugs overdose in the house she shared with her boyfriend Simon. Haunted by memories of Helen's childhood and the day she left home, Frank begins to delve into her private life. Simon reveals that the couple had grown apart and that Helen spent most of her evenings in a local bar, the Spire, with best friend Emma. By hacking into Helen's social networking account Frank tracks down Emma and asks her to help him clear Helen's things. The two embark on a friendship.

Ron, the doorman at the Spire, tells Frank that he supplied Helen with drugs at the behest of Emma's father Tommy, the club's owner. When Simon confesses that Helen had taken up with an older man, who had recently ended the relationship, Frank concludes that Helen and Tommy were having an affair: Helen's overdose was suicide. Frank visits the Spire; he sees Tommy but leaves without confronting him.

That night, Emma visits Frank at home and they sleep together.

SYNOPSIS Pailin, Cambodia, 2000-07. Investigative journalist Thet Sambath painstakingly tracks down Nuon Chea, Pol Pot's 'Brother Number Two' during the Khmer Rouge dictatorship of 1975-79. Among the regime's victims were Sambath's parents and brother – though Nuon Chea is initially unaware of this fact. Sambath also interviews Khoun and Suon, who carried out some of the killings, and introduces them to Nuon Chea. Nuon Chea absolves them, saying they were only following orders. He apologises to Sambath for the loss of his family, but remains unrepentant about his political ideals.

On 19 September 2007, Nuon Chea is arrested and charged with crimes against humanity.

and a bizarrely banal voiceover, which reaches ludicrous depths as Frank jabbars away to his missing daughter while making a pot of tea: "Not too weak, Dad." "Alwigh' babe."

What really lets Howman's film down, sadly enough, is its lead. It's clearly a labour of love for Winstone (he waived his fee) and you can see how it might have worked on paper: quintessential hardman Winstone plays against type as a middle-class solicitor reduced to a shambling sadsack by the death of his child. But in the jowly, pouting, beady-eyed flesh the actor fails to shake off his longstanding persona. Puffing and growling his way through the script, all dropped aitches and glottal stops, he's downright creepy. It doesn't help that Winstone's most odious – and indelible – performance was in Tim Roth's 1999 *The War Zone*, in which his amorous feelings towards his daughters were anything but implicit. Not for nothing is Winstone the go-to guy for shady gangsters: even as a dad, it seems, he's best when he's bad. ♦ Catherine Wheatley

CREDITS

Directed by
Karl Howman
Ethem Cetintas
Produced by
Riza Nur Paçalioglu
Written by
Karl Howman
Ethem Cetintas
Director of Photography
Digby Elliott
Edited by
Ash Mills
Production Designer
Neil Pollard
Music
Stuart Roslyn

©FoG Films Ltd
Production Companies
Silver Productions & Linefilm for FoG Films
Executive Producers
Karl Howman
Ethem Cetintas
Ray Winstone
Associate Producers
Charles Armitage
Alan McQueen
Accountant
Oliver Rusden
Location Manager
Mike Whealey
Continuity
Linos Mair Pritchard
Casting
Linefilm Ltd
Gaffer
Brian Hampton
Art Director
Richard Lloyd-Jones
Prop Master
Oliver Pickard
Costume Designer
Julie Evans
Hair/Make-up Designer
Stacey Kutzak
Soundtrack
"Not So Easy for Me" – John H. Stracey; "Can't Stop"; "Rescue Me"; "Searching"; "Soul Searching"; "Arrival"; "Revelation"; "The Dawn"
Sound Recordist
Steve Shearn
Re-recording Mixer
Kath Pollard

CAST

Ray Winstone
Frank Horner
Chloe Howman
Emma Salerno
Glen Murphy
Tommy Salerno
Lois Winstone
Helen Horner

James Hillier
Ron
Luke Kempner
Simon
Roger Kitter
Ricky Libra
Suzanna Cetintas
Helen Jr
Emma Vane
mum in coffee shop
Laura Marklew
waitress
Samantha Hunt
nightclub & coffee shop friend
Phillip Head
barman
Peter Ling
Tommy's friend in nightclub
June Thomas
librarian
Karen Smulovic
Simon's friend
Lewis Till
2nd barman
Isabella Cetintas
young girl at coffee shop
Billy Miller
CSI officer/Tommy's bodyguard
Elena Bennett
Ian William George
Samantha Hunt
coffee shop friends
Sue Roydon
lady walking dogs
Steve Jones
skipper; "Silver Spirit of Poole"
Dina Lees
nightclub friend
Mike Wheeler
nightclub DJ
Carl Thompson
Nadger Webb
Debra Lamb
coffee shop extras
Ian Hilditch
Joe Malik
doorman
Phillipa Burt
Ling Cheung
Nicholas Dixon
Ellie Rae Winstone
Adam Jackson
library extras

In Colour
[2.35:1]

Distributor
Soda Pictures

6,840 ft +0 frames

Fezeka's Voice

United Kingdom 2009

Director: Holly Lubbock

Certificate PG 79m 35s

In a high school in a deprived part of South Africa, a group of young black students are encouraged by their choir master and mentor Phumi Tsewu to look beyond the geographical and social limits of the ghetto. Holly Lubbock's documentary *Fezeka's Voice* is a film of two neat halves – the first based in and around Fezeka High School as the students prepare for the forthcoming trip to the UK (since most have barely left the township, the exoticism of Salisbury is almost unimaginable), and the second a more interesting exploration of their interaction with middle England.

The strength of the first 50 or so minutes lies in the individual stories of the young people, who live in an area afflicted by extreme poverty and segregation (their township doesn't even have enough grave-plots to accommodate its dead). Sixteen-year-old Busi, for instance, talks candidly about the death of her mother from Aids; a tiny, fragile-looking Nokwanda is disarmingly articulate about the difficulties of looking beyond poverty to higher education; 17-year-old Zukisa dreams of becoming a star.

They are encouraged by the paternalistic Phumi, whose benevolence extends well beyond his role as music teacher: he talks of sleepless nights worrying about his charges and we see him buying clothes for some of the worst off. Evidently an inspiring figure, quietly affirming the young people's right to dream, and aware of the choir's importance as an alternative to poverty and gang violence in the area, Phumi also provides a comic touch on screen that counteracts the gravitas of the film's social commentary. At times, however, his performance feels artificial – a scene in which he angrily threatens to cancel the trip because some students have arrived a few minutes late for a rehearsal is almost parodic, as though he is playing a version of himself for the benefit of the camera.

Though rich in pathos, the documentary lacks focus, tending to

SYNOPSIS A documentary about the Fezeka High School Choir, which comprises 77 underprivileged young people from the impoverished Guguletu township in South Africa. Inspired by music teacher Phumi Tsewu, they train for a once-in-a-lifetime performance at the Salisbury Arts Festival, where they have been invited to sing. The film follows the ups and downs of their preparations for the concert and the journey to England, where they live for two weeks with local families.

We learn that, a year after their return to South Africa, many of the students have gone on to higher education.

concentrate on generating suspense – long scenes in which Phumi tries to secure passports for two of the boys, for instance – or on the stark class differences between the students and their host families, rather than on the subtly compelling voices of the young people themselves. We cut away from footage of the choir singing in front of a rapt audience in Salisbury to an awkward sequence in which a host mother leads two of the boys around her vegetable garden, almost as though the filmmakers don't quite know where the real potency of their material lies.

Footage shot in the UK injects a welcome energy, allowing the film's key themes – equality, parity, aspiration – to develop naturally. A shot of the English and African choirs performing together in Salisbury Cathedral near the end is strikingly symbolic. Moments later, we're told that many of the students have gone on to further education. Though the film may sometimes lack focus or drive, then, its message is ultimately more valuable than the sum of its parts.

♦ Chloe Roddick

CREDITS

Directed
Holly Lubbock
Co-director
Kess Bohan
Produced
Katherine Crawley
JoAnne Fishburn
Edited
Holly Lubbock
Original Music
Ernie Wood
Dimitri Tchamouroff

©Ciel Productions
Production Companies
Ciel Productions
presents in association with Corniche Pictures
UK Film Council funded.
Screen South
Executive Producers
Christopher Hird
Hani Farsi
Associate Producers
Jo Metcalfe
Colin Maltby
Camera
UK:
Kess Bohan
Soundtrack
"The Armed Man" – The Rainbow Choir; "Ebber? Ne andrò lontana" from "La Vally" by Alfredo Catalani – Renée Fleming; "Thixo Bawo" – members of Fezeka High School Choir; "Hambini Madoda"; "Xa Ndiyekelwa"; "U Nonngquwuse"; "U Qongqotwane"; "Undikhathele" – Fezeka High School Choir; "Superstar" – Busiswe Ndlebe; "Konke Okwani" – Ingonyama
Sound Mixer
Luke Hatfield
Sound Editor
Ed Rallton

WITH

Phume Tsewu
Julie Sondayise
Zukisa Nyaba
Nokwanda Bovana
Busi Ndlebe
Thobela (Peter)
Ntshanyana

Zuki Tsewu
Helen Birchenough
Sue Taylor
Francis Taylor
Jane Capper
Fiona Evans
Fezeka High School Choir
Salisbury Community Choir
Rainbow Choir Orchestra

In Colour
[1.78:1]
Part-subtitled

Distributor
Ciel Productions

7162 ft +1 frame

For Colored Girls

USA 2010

Director: Tyler Perry

With Janet Jackson, Loretta Devine, Michael Ealy, Kimberly Elise
Certificate 15 133m 28s

Say this for Tyler Perry: granted seemingly unlimited creative freedom thanks to a string of consistently profitable, modestly budgeted hits, he's chosen to use his clout for what is almost certainly the year's least commercial adaptation. Ntozake Shange's 1974 'choreopoem' *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf* is as unmarketable as its unwieldy title suggests: a series of plotless monologues delivered by seven unnamed women. Perry takes the texts as unalterable holy writ, stuffing them whole into a typically melodramatic plot where they might emerge at any moment, their origin clearly not from his functionally emotive prose. A police officer's question might be met with a feverish monologue ("Eyes crawling up on me, eyes crawling up my thighs"), a confession of past sexual transgression delivered as an actor's showcase. The constant mode-switching is jarring.

Set in New York City (establishing shots plausibly cover up that most of the film was shot in Perry's Atlanta homebase), *For Colored Girls* juggles nine different women whose paths weave in and out of each other's way. Perry seems convinced he's made the black *Short Cuts*, though he doesn't have the rhythmic skill for it. The stories are studiously mundane: high-powered magazine executive Janet Jackson is unhappy in her marriage, slutty Thandie Newton sleeps around and neglects her family, et al.

The point's the same in every case: do not have sex ever, or even think about it, because horrible things will happen. You will get raped, nearly die during an abortion or be unable to conceive because of prior untreated STDs. Even marriage is inadvisable, lest your partner turn out to be gay and (inevitably) infect you with HIV. All these things – and more – are visited upon Perry's women, broken up only by monologues delivered in deeply unflattering close-ups. (Poor Whoopi Goldberg, all bug-eyed religious mania, is the stuff future internet memes will be born from.)

Even for the church-circuit market Perry got started on and panders to, the severity of the message seems overplayed: his ideal seems pretty close to voluntary chemical castration. His racial politics call for community solidarity: "There's no colour in this office," community organiser Loretta Devine chides Jackson, "including you." Unexpectedly, the film's very much in favour of condom usage, which is irrelevant: all sexual interaction here is strictly pathological. Perry goes for the gusto, but his views seem moored someplace far before 1974.

♦ Vadim Rizov



No sex please: Jason Graham, Thandie Newton

CREDITS

Directed by
Tyler Perry
Produced by
Tyler Perry
Paul Hall
Roger M. Bobb
Written for the screen by
Tyler Perry
Based upon the stage play entitled *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf* by Ntozake Shange
Director of Photography
Alexander Gruszynski
Editor
Maysie Hoy
Production Designer
Ina Mayhew
Music by/Score Conducted by/Piano Performed by
Aaron Zigman

@Very Perry Films
Production Companies
Lionsgate and TPS
present a 34th Street Films/Lionsgate production
A film by Tyler Perry
Executive Producers
Ozzie Areu
Joseph P. Genier

Nzingha Stewart
Michael Paseornek
Co-producer
Charisse Nesbit
Line Producer
Deborah A. Evans
Unit Production Manager
Joseph P. Genier
Production Supervisor
Tim Andrew
Production Co-ordinators
Cheryl A. Miller
NY Unit:
Adi Amit
Production Accountant
Derek Yip
Location Managers
John H. Findley III
NY Unit:
Iani MacGregor
Collin M. Smith
Post-production Supervisor
Carl Pedregal
Assistant Directors
1st: Roger M. Bobb
2nd: Angi Bones
Script Supervisor
Amy Blanc Lacy
Casting
Robi Reed
Camera Operators
A: Ted Chu
B: Brant S. Fagan
Steadicam Operator
Brant S. Fagan

Gaffer
Kevin Murphy
Key Grips
J. Wayne Parker
NY Unit:
Richard Guinness Jr
Charlie Marroquin
Visual Effects
2G Digital
Special Effects
Justin Crump
Eric A. Martin
Art Directors
Roswell Hamrick
NY Unit:
Audrey Soodoo Raphael
Set Designer
Danny Brown
Set Decorators
C. Lance Totten
NY Unit:
Amanda Carroll
Property Masters
Kathleen Kasinger
NY Unit:
Kevin Ladson
Construction Co-ordinators
Jay M. Womer
NY Unit:
Richard Tenewitz
Costume Designer
Johnetta Boone
Costume Supervisors
Darlene Jackson
NY Unit:
Careen Fowles

Department Head
Make-up
Anita Gibson
Key Make-up Artist
Dionne Wynn
Department Head
Hairstylist
Kenneth Walker
Key Hairstylist
Valerie Gladstone
Main Title /Travel Sequence Design
RokIt
End Titles
Scarlet Letters
Score Performed by
Hollywood Studio
Symphony Orchestra
Violin Solos Performed by
Joshua Bell
Choir Member Soloist
Elissa Johnston
Orchestrations
Jerry Hey
Aaron Zigman
Music Supervisor
Joel C. High
Soundtrack
"What More Can They Do" – Laura Izibor;
"Longer & Stronger" – Sharon Jones & The Dap-Kings; "I Found God in Myself (Ntozake's Song)" – Mem Ntshadi; "All Day Long (Blue Skies)" – Estelle; "Alone in My Room" – Danny Wayne;

"Ansomnia" – Zaki Ibrahim; "Drive Me Crazy" – Miss Eighty6; "Settle" – Gladys Knight; "Sun" – Lalah Hathaway; "La Donna in Viola" by Aaron Zigman – Karen Slack, Andrea Jones-Sojola, The Hollywood Studio Symphony Orchestra; "You Know (I'm at It Again)" – Soul P; "Sechita (A senhora em amarelo)" – The Carondelet Percussion Ensemble; "Stand Up" – Macy Gray; "Without a Fight" – Janelle Monáe; "Four Women" – Nina Simone, Simone, Laura Izibor, Ledisi, contains a sample of "Four Women" – Nina Simone; "I Know Who I Am" – Leona Lewis
Production Sound Mixer
Damian Elias Canelos
Antonio Arroyo
Re-recording Mixers
Gary Summers
Daniel J. Leahy
Supervising Sound Editor
Mike Wilhoit
Stunt Co-ordinators
Atlanta:
Scott Dale
NY:
Eddie Watkins

Macy Gray
Rose
Khalil Kain
Bill
Richard Lawson
Frank
Rayna Tharani
Renee
Jaycee Williams
Kenya
Thomas 'Deuce' Jessup
Kwame
May Zayan
Katina
John Crow
Dr Davis
Michael Cory Davis
man 1
Jason Graham
man 2
Ayo Sorrells
man 4
Kendrick Cross
man 5
Joe Amato
driver
Ambrya Underwood
girl 1
Jackie Prucha
nurse
Holly Crawshaw
waitress
Roevelly Rancell
nurse
David Feigenbaum
security guard
Karen Slack
soprano 1
Andrea Jones-Sojola
soprano 2
Jeanette Illidge
soprano 3
Jazmia Battle
dancer
Morgan Caldwell
Sakinah Davis
Ashlee Gillum
Chantia Robinson
Sarah Soto
Alexis Whitehead
Brionna Williams
dancers
Taja Riley
Yasmine dance double

Dolby Digital/SDDS
Colour by
DeLuxe
[1.85:1]

Distributor
Lionsgate UK

12,012 ft +0 frames

Fred The Movie

USA 2010

Director: Clay Weiner

With Lucas Cruikshank, Pixie Lott, Jennette McCurdy, Jake Weary
Certificate 12A 83m 10s

Growing up in Columbus, Nebraska (population hovering around 20,000), deeply bored teenager Lucas Cruikshank came up with 'Fred Figglehorn', a YouTube celebrity whose channel was the first to gain more than a million subscribers and whose work – since his first filming in 2006 – has gained more than 625 million video views. In the videos, Fred – then six years old, with a missing father and alcoholic mother – shrieked in a nearly unlistenable voice (speeded up multiple times), appealing exclusively to those under ten years old.

Fred's cinematic debut is produced by cynically successful director Brian Robbins (*Varsity Blues*, *Norbit* and himself a former child star on the 1980s sitcom *Head of the Class*), directed by commercials director Clay Weiner and worked from a script by *Family Guy* executive producer David A. Goodman. The resulting film is infinitely more tolerable than Fred's YouTube excursions (his voice here is pitch-shifted rather than speeded up, which makes it less abrasive), thanks to Weiner's visual slickness, Goodman's penchant for random curveballs and the – probably inadvertent – darkness of Cruikshank's original creation. (Fred was already plenty dark: in one of his YouTube videos he gibbered feverishly, having not taken his medication, and ranted about a drawing he'd made of an adult abusing a child.)

The film was made independently, then sold to children's network Nickelodeon for US broadcast (it received 7.8 million viewers when it premiered); the smart casting of UK pop star Pixie Lott (seven top-20 singles and counting) assures its British release. The film concerns Fred's journey to winning over his British dream girl, a standard-issue geek-becomes-man saga deranged almost beyond recognition. On the journey from his suburban house to his beloved Judy's party, Fred (now 15 rather than six) takes the bus (the film, recognisably shot in Los Angeles, doesn't skimp on the grim realities of the derelicts of much public transport), runs into a talking deer, and generally has a weird time.

Fred's persona is somewhere between Tom Green's shrieking abrasion, Jim Varney's Ernest's gleeful moronocism, Pee-wee Herman's deliberate regression and Mr Bill's shrill expectations of catastrophe. The randomised joke approach is strictly *Family Guy*: in between musical numbers come bits of sociopolitical commentary. Fred's house (and the whole film's universe) is a dead-on suburban nightmare: his dumb, pasty, loutish, bullying enemy Kevin screams, "I'm the king of the

SYNOPSIS New York City, the present. Crystal's Iraq War veteran boyfriend Willie drinks heavily and doesn't take his medication, abusing her and the children; social worker Kelly tries to help, but is distracted when she learns that an untreated STD has rendered her infertile. Crystal's boss – fashion magazine magnate Jo – is experiencing her own marital difficulties.

Crystal's neighbour Tangie sleeps around, while her sister Nyla lives with their religious fanatic mother Alice. Nyla takes dance lessons with Yasmine, who is raped on a second date. Crystal forgets a paper Jo needs for a meeting; Jo drives Crystal to her apartment. Willie, convinced that Crystal's having an affair and that the children may not be his, throws them out of the window to their deaths. Jo, Kelly and community organiser Juanita converge to support a now suicidal Crystal.

After a back-alley abortion almost leaves her dead, Nyla is attacked by Alice and runs away. Spotted by Kelly, she's brought to clean up in Crystal's apartment, where she reconciles with Tangie. Alice attacks Tangie for letting Nyla get an abortion and reminds her that she was molested as a child; neighbour Gilda overhears and lectures Tangie on confronting her past so that she can stop sleeping around. A traumatised Yasmine begins to recover after her rapist is killed. Juanita breaks up with her unfaithful boyfriend Frank. Jo learns that she has contracted HIV from her husband, who has gay sex on the sly.

All the women, now friends, converge for a party celebrating Nyla's impending move to college.

SYNOPSIS US, the present. Fred Figgelhorn has a crush on his neighbour Judy, but her boyfriend – bully Kevin – stands in his way. When Fred's alcoholic mother tells him that Judy has moved, he embarks on a trip to declare his love. After overcoming various obstacles en route, he arrives at Judy's house, where she is having a party. Fred accidentally vomits on her. Humiliated (and exposed to YouTube ridicule in the process), he decides to stage a fake party with the help of Judy's friend Bertha. After publicly 'disinviting' everyone from attending, they upload a video that makes it look as if the party is a big success. Everyone at school denies they weren't invited, and Fred becomes popular. Judy comes to Fred's house to sing with him.

cul-de-sac" – a perfect encapsulation of the milieu. Weirder still are Fred's hallucinations of his missing father, played by WWE wrestler John Cena, who not only headlocks his imaginary son but also at one point dons camouflage and puts him in an army Humvee. The implication – Fred justifying his stalker love by remembering his late father's death in Iran – is even weirder than you'd expect.

The film isn't perfect; as with *Family Guy*, not all the jokes connect (though the success rate is generally higher), and a few token concessions to the Nickelodeon sensibility are inevitable. But in its own way *Fred The Movie* isn't that far from Terry Gilliam's *Tideland* (2005): one messed-up kid trying to make sense of a messed-up world of parental abuse any way he can, just in a funnier and more consistent way.

♦♦ **Vadim Rizov**

CREDITS

Directed by
Clay Weiner
Screenplay
David A. Goodman
Based on the character 'Fred Figgelhorn' created by Lucas Cruikshank
Director of Photography
Scott Henriksen
Film Editor
Ned Bastille
Production Designer
Joshua Locy
Music Composed and Conducted by
Roddy Bottum

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Production Companies
Varsity Pictures
presents in association with The Collective
Executive Producers
Lucas Cruikshank
Gary Binkow
Evan Weiss
Michael Green
Brian Robbins
Sharla Sumpter
Bridgett
Co-producer
Meghann Collins
Line Producer/Unit Production Manager
Don Dunn
Production Co-ordinator
Dan Suhart

Production Accountant
Jeff McCaig
Location Manager
Jason Kay
Post-production Supervisor
Don Dunn
Assistant Directors
1st: Lyda Blank
2nd: Billy Greenfield
Script Supervisor
Shene Giebtrock
Casting
Sheryl Levine
Camera Operators
A: Jake Avignone

B: Tim Hennessy
Steadicam Operator
Jake Avignone
Gaffer
Jeff Fitzgerald
Key Grip
Tim Staubs
Art Director
Thomas Obed
Set Decorator
Ryan Leegate
Property Master
Jason Kisvardy
Costume Designer
Lydia Paddon
Costume Supervisor
Astrid Gallegos
Make-up Department Head
Michelle Buhler
Mechanical Deer Provided by
Anatomorphex
Puppeteers
Robert Devine
Val Crawford
Hair Department Head
Roxa Dolt
Main Title Sequence
Patrick Hruby

Music Supervisor
Madonna Wade-Reed
Soundtrack
"Waiting for the Heart to Beat" – Lights On; "Fire Burning" – Lucas Cruikshank; "Love Will Keep Us Together" – Jake Weary, Pixie Lott; "Solid" – Ashford & Simpson; "Jig-a-lo" – Thelonijs Carter Jr.; "Dynamite"; "The Deal Is Off" – The Measles; "International Competition" – Cherry Orange; "Schermin" – Julie Bellamy; "Fuego" – Inno featuring Anthony; "Kick Ya Feet Up" – Marty James; "Let's Go" – KU; "Boys and Girls" – Pixie Lott; "Live It Up"; "Who's Ready to Party" – FRED
Sound Supervisors
David Kitchens
Ben Zarai
Production Sound Mixer
Matthew Nicolay
Re-recording Mixer/Supervising Sound Editor
David Barber
Stunt Co-ordinator
Kim Robert Koscki

CAST

Lucas Cruikshank
Fred Figgelhorn/Derf
Jennette McCurdy
Bertha
Jake Weary
Kevin
Siobhan Fallon Hogan
Fred's mom

John Cena
Fred's dad
Oscar Núñez
Lorenzo
Stephanie Courtney
Kevin's mom
Pixie Lott
Judy
Jack Coughlan
young Fred
Mak Kriksciun
little Evan Weiss
Robert Noble
#6 bus driver
Gary Anthony Williams
laundromat manager
John Gatins
car wash clerk 1
Bambadjan Bamba
car wash clerk 2
Kirsten Berman
Fiat driver
Jordan Black
Gary
Dave Silva
man who doesn't speak English
Chris Wylde
security guard
Kevin Olson
older Evan Weiss
Edith Jefferson
old woman
Cassandra Braden
#7 bus driver
Alicia Favela
girl 1
Jazzlyn Marae
girl 2
Dallas Lovato
girl 3
Ronald Hysten
boy 1
Eddy Martin
boy 2
Trevor Brown
boy 3
Clay Weiner
Danny Janetti

Dolby Digital In Colour [L78:1]

Distributor
Lionsgate UK

7484 ft +9 frames

No US theatrical release.
Nickelodeon tx18
September 2010

In Our Name

United Kingdom 2010

Director: Brian Welsh

With Joanne Froggatt, Mel Raido, Chloe-Jayne Wilkinson

Dedicated to "the thousands of servicemen and women who have been incarcerated in British prisons after attempting to return to civilian life", Brian Welsh's film is clearly on the side of Joanne Froggatt's embattled private as she copes with post-traumatic stress disorder on returning home to the north-east after a tour of duty in Iraq.

The most positive aspect of this modestly budgeted drama is that it throws dramatic light on a genuine problem that's too easily ignored on these shores (but given rather more fulsome cinematic treatment in US offerings, including Jim Sheridan's *Brothers*, Oren Moverman's *The Messenger* and Kimberly Peirce's *Stop-Loss*). Indeed, we come away with an understanding of what it's like to leave the comradeship of frontline service behind, to face the very different demands of home life with a husband and daughter who have become virtual strangers – not to mention the challenge of putting guilt-racked images of the dead and wounded to one side and just getting on with the everyday. Welsh's screenplay makes a potent point in a scene where Froggatt's increasingly frayed Suzy plays down her problems in a debriefing with her superior officer, because she doesn't want it to show on her record and affect her chances of promotion.

From there on the proceedings pretty much devolve into thriller mode, with tension simmering away while we wonder if Suzy's mounting paranoia will fragment into complete psychosis and put her young daughter in danger. It's an understandable strategy when trying to hold an audience sensing a turn-off in the subject-matter, but it leaves the film looking as if it's chasing short-term sensation rather than a coherent thematic through-line for Suzy's troubled progress. After a few grainy (and none too convincing) flashbacks to the image of a dead Iraqi child, she relives her traumatic experiences for the benefit of a stunned junior-school classroom, at which point it's as if Welsh is unsure where to take the story next. The drama changes tack to focus on Suzy's volatile soldier husband Mark's even more damaged

psyche, leading to a brawny standoff between him and her supportive army comrade Paul, and thereafter to a brutal attack on a local Muslim minicab driver who has protested against British military involvement in Iraq. By trying to cover so many bases, the film becomes increasingly superficial and its argument somewhat fuzzy (beyond the simple notion of supporting our servicemen and women in their hour of need). This is typified by a somewhat arbitrary suspense finale involving Suzy's daughter getting hold of the pistol her mum has illicitly smuggled out from the barracks.

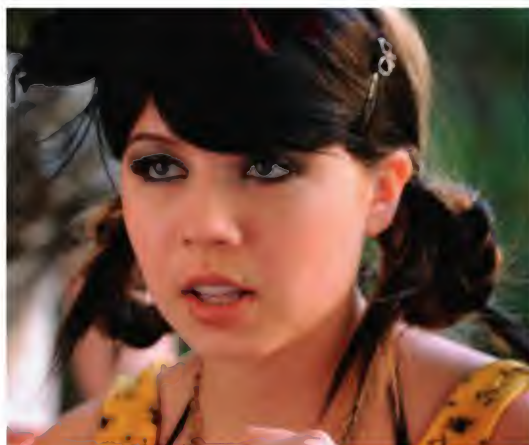
By showing Suzy joining in the assault on the cabbie, the film is steely enough to avoid portraying its heroine as a saint in combat fatigues, but the loss of focus in the writing is disappointing given the evident skills Welsh displays behind the camera. His experience as an editor perhaps comes into play in the assured way he finds the right rhythm for each scene, often creating effective moments of pause for reflection for both Suzy and the audience. Deft framing together with the just-so physicality of Froggatt's persuasive central performance creates a sense from the outset of a woman entirely edgy in her domestic surroundings. These quiet moments bring an element of finesse to the film's evident compassion and commitment, yet a more crafted script might have lifted the end result up a few notches from enterprising effort to finished article. ♦♦ **Trevor Johnston**

CREDITS

Directed by
Brian Welsh
Produced by
Michelle Eastwood
Written by
Brian Welsh
Cinematographer
Sam Care
Editor
Hazel Baillie
Production Designer
Anna Lavelle
Music
Stuart Earl

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Production Companies
Curzon Artificial Eye and NFTS present in association with BBC Films and Front Page Films an Escape Films and A10 Films production
Executive Producers
Philip Knatchbull
Nik Powell
Daniel Chamrier

Line Producer
Paul Garcia
Associate Producer for Escape Films
Pumina Ramadorai
Production Manager
Edwin Mingard
Production Accountant
Laura Ferguson
Location/Unit Manager
Jamie Korn
Assistant Directors
1st: Malcolm Davies
2nd: Lynsey Palmer
Script Supervisor
Frankie Appleton
Casting Director
Sam Claypole
Script Consultant
Sarah Golding
Gaffer
Alex Veitch
Edit Consultant
Nicolas Chauderge
Art Director
Michael Costine



Popular front: Jennette McCurdy

SYNOPSIS North-east England, present day. Suzy, a private in the British Army, has returned home after a tour of duty in Iraq. She struggles to readjust to life with her squaddie husband Mark and their daughter Cass; she is unable to meet Mark's sexual demands and is traumatised by images of an injured Iraqi child. Worried that admitting to her problems will affect her chance of promotion, she underplays the situation to her senior officer, but when called on by her teacher sister Marie to do a presentation at a junior school, she breaks down while recalling her guilt at the Iraqi child's death. Increasingly paranoid, she becomes obsessed with protecting her own daughter. Mark convinces himself that Suzy had an affair with fellow private Paul while on duty. After a confrontation between the two men, Suzy and Mark take part in a vicious attack on a Muslim minicab driver who has expressed understanding for fundamentalists. Suzy discovers photographs of Mark posing with Iraqi corpses. She takes a pistol from the barracks and goes with Cass to the nearby woods. While her mother sleeps, Cass fires the gun, bringing Suzy to her senses.



Total recall: Chloe-Jayne Wilkinson, Joanne Froggatt

Costume Designer
Kate Eccles
Hair/Make-up Designer
Marie Morgan
Special Effects Make-up Designer
Photography:
Mark Danbury
Arcade Music by
Matthew Davidson
Soundtrack
"Paralyser", "Freefall" – Tribazik; "Balle Shava" – Tigerstyle; "Dubby Tune" – Christian Fenn
Sound Recordists
Adam Carr
Michael Gandham
Re-recording Mixer/Supervising Sound Editor
Christopher Wilson
Stunt Co-ordinator
Wayne Thompson
Police Consultant
Nick Sharpling

CAST

Joanne Froggatt
Suzy
Mel Raido
Mark
Chloe-Jayne Wilkinson
Cass
Andrew Knott
Paul
Janine Leigh
Marie
Drew Horsley
Tony
John Henshaw
Frank
Anna Maria Gascoigne
Sandra
Bill Fellows
Dr Tennant
Shah Amin
taxi driver
Begum Coskum
Iraqi girl
Steve Wraith
drill sergeant
Lawson Hind
pub friend
Val MacLane
landlady
Therese Neve
trolley lady
Teresa Critchley
teacher
Dennis Jobling
John

Alex Kinsey
Ed
Arabella Arnott
school mum
Peter Michael
McGowan
man on train
Natalie Dandy
school child 1
Robyn James
school child 2
Becky Eskandari
Abdul Miah
Emad Sadr
actors for Iraq
photographs
Timothy Williamson
train worker
Chris Bailey
Richard Gardner
Geoff Joves
Marc McDougall
Jack Parret
soldiers on train
Danielle Pilmore
David Robinson
Ben Spence
train passengers
Paul Irwin
Natasha McIntyre
David J. Ross
Emma Short
Helen Taylor
Joyce Taylor
party goers
Callum Courtney
Ledian Devolli
Chantelle Garner
Chantelle Kelly
Sani Roka Magar
Priscille Mbiakayi
Shannon McAteer
Jack McLeod
Connor Morgan
Lucy Thomas
Natasha White
Carly Wilkinson
Courtney Wilson
school children
Sharon Carr
Jane Gallon
Veronica Merabet
Kelly Telford
Mandy Turnbull
playground mothers
Morgan Fitzharris
Shy Mallaburn
Bethany Marr
Beth McKenna
Lila Merabet
playground children
Lauren Balthmain-Davies
Peter Brown

Scott Carter
Dominic Clanzel
Mark Clanzel
Mark Condor
Grant Longstaff
soldiers on the hill
Jacob Anderton
Jessica Booth
Katherine Clarke
Sally Collett
Laura Cropper
Stacey Emslie
Nathalie Johnston
Beka Keenan
Stephanie Lang
Lauren Morrison
Ali Pritchard
Francesca Scott
Charlotte Sisson
arcade players
Laura Biziou-Van Pol
Joseph De Haan
couple in street
Chris Bailey
Collette Conkin
Natalie Denholm
Owen Jackson
Jade Paldreymen
Liam Mainstone
Virag Norbert
Mark Robertson
Greg Tenkinson
soldiers in barracks
Connor Massey
Martin Soulsby
kids in street
Brian Allen
Ian Bailey
John Coldwell
Ben Creighton
Paul Curry
Ken Davidson
Annie Eccles
Jane Eccles
John Elsander
Harry Flexman
Martyn Grahame
Diane Heslop
Marc Hutton
Richard Law
Ian McCabe
David Rose
David Ross
Matt Teasdale
Lee Thompson
John Waters
Mary Weatherston
Terry Wright
British Legion drinkers
Michaela Jayne
Charlton
Martyn Forsyth
Isabel Harris
Lynsey Palmer

Natasha Rapkin
David Watson
kids outside house
Noz Islam
Taj Mohamed
Iram Muhtar
neighbours
Babul Haque
Karan Jary
Louis Quinn
hoodies
Rachel Campbell
Stacey Emslie
Peter Gleeson
Emme Hocking
Beka Keenan
Stephanie Lang
Lauren Morrison
bowlers
Anthony A. Abladeya
Mark Allison
James Byers
Chris Campbell
Raymond Carr
Robert Davidson
Mark Golightly
Eddy Good
Pauline Good
Dennis Hewitt
Liam Thornton
Garth Warson
additional supporting artists

Dolby Digital
In Colour
[1.85:1]

Distributor
Artificial Eye Film
Company

Loose Cannons

Italy 2010

Director: Ferzan Özpetek

With Riccardo Scamarcio, Nicole Grimaudo, Alessandro Preziosi

The opening of *Loose Cannons* is organised around a big family occasion of the type that has become known (and sometimes derided) in the Italian press as an 'Ozpetek meal', after Turkish-born, Italian-based director Ferzan Özpetek's frequent staging of convivial, sensual gatherings at which relationships are made and broken amid overlapping conversations and startling declarations. Dynamically cinematic in their characterisation and cinematography, these meals border on Italian national stereotype, propelled by lavish production design and expressive gestures that risk camp – a charge that can be levelled at Özpetek's latest film as a whole, not least in comparison to Luca Guadagnino's *I Am Love* (2009), a higher-profile release which similarly begins with a dinner where management of a family company is passed from father to son.

Albeit less highly stylised than *I Am Love*, *Loose Cannons* is a tender response to Italian cinematic history and familial culture. While secrets and lies enfold, and unfold within, the clan in each film, the fact that the primary revelation in *Loose Cannons* is of closeted homosexuality – first confessed by the younger to the older brother, and then by the older brother (and heir apparent) to the assembled company – allows Özpetek to explore and exploit the essential comedic campness of melodrama, and to include a *Priscilla*-style musical interlude in Speedos when younger brother Tommaso's friends from Rome's drag scene arrive to thrill conservative Lecce. The film also makes manifest the homophobia and sexism that are not particularly latent in Italian culture, in a generational tale of repeated repression framed by

the grandmother memories of the dramatic choice she made on her wedding day.

Özpetek derives a cinematic charge by casting Italian leading man Riccardo Scamarcio (*My Brother Is an Only Child*, *The Best of Youth*) as gay younger brother Tommaso. He's a familiar figure in Özpetek's oeuvre: quiet, watchful, overshadowed by his large family, slightly martyred by his love for them. Tommaso is also a frustrating figure, relatively passive in the dilemma created by his brother Antonio beating him to the punch by coming out at the dinner. Having arrived in Lecce full of Roman cosmopolitan verve, he immediately reverts to filial duty even when confronted by his parents' agonising homophobia towards Antonio. Once on the factory floor, he also conforms to class when negotiating with the workers, and spends increasing amounts of time with his co-manager Alba, who is both business-savvy and stunningly beautiful, pitched by her father as a match for one of the brothers.

Alba is one of a suite of women in the film, including the grandmother and her daughter Luciana (who pretends she is being burgled frequently to excuse the presence of her never-seen lover), who have been damaged by social pressure to conform. In Tommaso and his boyfriend Marco and their devil-may-care flirtatious friends, these women find role models for setting themselves free, or so the film suggests. In the final act, it drifts from melodrama into a fantasia based on Olma's ultimate, exaggerated act of free will and her last testament; her funeral shifts, imaginatively, into a return to her wedding party at which everyone is free to dance with everyone else, across genders, generations, rejection, and even death. Inverting the opening dinner, the dance silences the loud voices and their homophobic jokes, evoking a sensual, spirited world that is equally a Mediterranean cliché, but suggesting – through the closeness of two handsome brothers – that there was always something queer about it.

◆ Sophie Mayer

SYNOPSIS Lecce, Apulia, the present. The Cantone family are assembling for a dinner at which patriarch Vincenzo will formally hand over management of the family's pasta factory to his two sons – Antonio, an assistant manager at the factory, and younger brother Tommaso, who now lives in Rome, ostensibly studying business.

Tommaso has returned to Lecce with two bombshells to drop at dinner, which he first confesses to Antonio: he has been studying literature, and writing a novel; and he is gay. Before Tommaso can tell the assembled company, however, Antonio steals his thunder by announcing that he is gay, prompting Vincenzo to bar him from the house and have a heart attack.

Tommaso, fearful for his father's health, remains in Lecce to manage the factory, aided by the attractive and canny Alba, daughter of his father's associate. He becomes the man of the household for his homophobic mother, his alcoholic aunt and his diabetic grandmother, lost in memories of her wedding day. At the same time he is trying to work on his novel and maintain a phone relationship with boyfriend Marco.

Eventually Marco takes matters into his own hands: he travels from Rome with a group of glamorous gay friends for a beach weekend in Lecce, where they charm the Cantone women and flirt with the Cantone men, provoking a crisis of conscience for Tommaso when they leave. His grandmother, founder of the factory, determines to use her will to set herself – and her troubled children and grandchildren – free.

CREDITS

Directed by
Ferzan Özpetek
Produced by
Domenico Procacci
Story/Screenplay
Ivan Cotroneo
Ferzan Özpetek
Director of Photography
Maurizio Calvesi
Editor
Patrizio Marone
Art Director
Andrea Crisanti
Music
Pasquale Catalano

@Fandango
Production Companies
Domenico Procacci presents a Fandango and Faros production in collaboration with Rai Cinema
A film by Ferzan Özpetek
In association with Apulia Film Commission
Co-financed by FESR – Fondo Europeo di Sviluppo Regionale
Ente Regione Puglia
Line Producer
Gianluca Leunini
Production Manager
Roberto Leone
Production Supervisor
Claudio Zampetti
Production Co-ordinator
Giorgia Passarelli
Financial Controller
Antonio Altea
Location Manager
Andrea Coppola
Post-production Supervisor
Monica Verzolini
Assistant Director
Gianluca Mazzella
Script Supervisor
Laura Curreli
Casting
Pino Pellegrino
Camera Operator/ Steadicam Operator
Luigi Andrei

Gaffer
Emilio Scattaretto
Key Grip
Ondino Massimo Galiano
Construction Manager
Massimo Sergianni
Costume Designer
Alessandro Lai
Key Make-up
Ermanno Spera
Make-up
Anna Maria Romoli
Cristina Amadio
Key Hair Stylist
Mirella Ginnoto
Hair Stylists
Gianmarco Gaeta
Arianna Palmucci
Titles
Chromatica Visual Effects
Orchestrated/ Conducted by
Pasquale Catalano
Giuseppe Sasso
Soundtrack
"50mila (Mine Vaganti version)" – Nina Zilli;
"Yara" – Radiodervish featuring Alessia Tondo;
"Pensiero Stupendo (Live)" – Patty Pravo;
"Ancora Ancora Ancora"; "La cumparsita"; "The Way We Were"; "Sorry I'm a Lady" – Baccara; "Una notte a Napoli" – Pink Martini; "Kullama" – Sezen Aksu
Music Consultant
Lula Sarchioni
Sound Recordist
Marco Grillo
Sound Mixer
Roberto Moroni
Sound Editors
Sandro Petica
Giuseppe D'Amato
Francesco Vallocchia
Stunt Co-ordinator
Angelo Ragusa

CAST

Riccardo Scamarcio
Tommaso Cantone
Nicole Grimaudo
Alba Brunetti

Alessandro Preziosi
Antonio Cantone
Ennio Fantastichini
Vincenzo Cantone
Lunetta Saviano
Stefania Cantone
Ilaria Occhini
grandmother
Bianca Nappi
Elena, Tommaso's sister
Carmine Recano
Marco
Massimiliano Gallo
Salvatore, Elena's husband
Paola Minaccioni
Teresa
Gianluca De Marchi
Davide
Mauro Bonaffini
Massimiliano
Giorgio Marchesi
Nicola
Matteo Taranto
Domenico
Gea Martire
Patrizia
Daniele Pecci
Andrea
Carolina Crescentini
grandmother, as a young woman
Elena Sofia Ricci
Luciana Cantone, aunt
Giancarlo Monticelli
Raffaele Brunetti
Crescenza Guarnieri
Antonietta
Emanuela Gabrieli
Giovanna
Joselito Gargasole
waiter
Totò Costantini
pastry chef
Giampaolo Morelli
Mancini
Patrizia Carla Guido
dry-cleaner's employee
Cosimo Tomaiuolo
marketing executive
Ermanno Spera
nurse
Barbara De Matteis
pastry chef
Claudio Cozzolino
Loredana Limbici
friends
Ludovica Centonze
Aurora Persano
Elena's daughters

Dolby Digital
In Colour
[2.35:1]
Subtitles

Distributor
Peccadillo Pictures Ltd

Italian theatrical title
Mine vaganti

Love & Other Drugs

Director: Edward Zwick
With Jake Gyllenhaal, Anne Hathaway, Oliver Platt, Hank Azaria

This self-consciously sophisticated, acerbic but sentimental comedy-drama, in which a womanising drug salesman falls for a tough-talking Parkinson's sufferer, feels like an odd choice for director Edward Zwick, best known for muscular action-with-issues movies such as *Glory*, *Blood Diamond* and *Defiance*. He's got form with relationship dramas, as TV series *thirtysomething* and his Mamet adaptation debut *About Last Night...* attest, but this sex-soaked kinda-comedy, replete with uneasily raunchy interludes – as when the lovers' home-made sex video is used as a masturbation aid by the hero's brother – doesn't seem his speed. What's oddest of all is that Zwick's films are invariably thoughtful and well made, in a traditional and crafted sense, and this uneasy mix of Big Pharma insider tales and disease-of-the-week romance simply isn't.

Zwick, fascinated by the ruthlessness of pharmaceutical selling, aims a few darts at US healthcare (heroine Maggie learns about patient power, and buses impoverished OAPs to Canada for cheap meds). But the film's obligation to open out and fictionalise former salesman Jamie Reidy's expose of a 1990s drug rep's tricks, *Hard Sell: The Evolution of a Viagra Salesman*, means that it trades heavily and comically on the hero's education as a drug rep, as he dumps his rival's samples off practice shelves and seduces doctors and practice nurses both figuratively and literally.

Sex quickly emerges as the film's unifying theme, as Jamie and the equally commitment-phobic Maggie's hot but initially casual couplings show them both using sex as an anaesthetic against emotion, in a reversal of romantic comedy norms. Elsewhere in the film, sex is the key to business (Jamie sets up doctors with girls, and is enriched by the rush for the Viagra he touts) yet also a hopeless compulsion for his internet-porn-addicted brother (Josh Gad), who is wrecking his own marriage.

But why does Zwick, who with co-writer Marshall Hershkowitz examined sexual power relations in couples with acuity in *thirtysomething*, keep the film's take on sex so sophomoric? Apatowian rueful raunch is periodically shoehorned into the plot, mostly by

Gad's Jonah Hill-styled vulgarity, reaching a mirthless live-by-the-sword low when Jamie suffers a comic Viagra overdose at a pyjama party. Yet the one interesting thing about the many sex scenes between the lead couple is how they reverse conventional objectification. It's Jake Gyllenhaal's body the camera lingers over, presenting a parade of Jamie's bronzed thigh and buttock that make him look more *Playboy* centrefold than playboy. Clothed, Gyllenhaal's smirky, flirty performance fares little better, appearing a callow and less captivating version of George Clooney's corporate charmer from *Up in the Air*. Here, his romantic hero feels a tad manufactured, as did his *Prince of Persia* action hero, unlike his more nuanced dramatic roles. Anne Hathaway, as the sarcastic, teasing object of his affections, walks away with the movie – and not just because she manages to make the shaky-hand symptoms of stage-one Parkinson's poignant rather than showy Oscar-bait. Her Maggie deftly layers fear, caustic humour and prickly self-defence, and the scene in which she shrilly breaks up with Jamie because "You're not a good person because you pity-fuck the sick girl" is the movie's one really effective moment.

It's a shame this blithely genre-hopping film can't find its feet, to let the narrative match her performance. Swinging between glossy satire of Big Pharma's ruthless retailing and an increasingly glutinous love story, it finally descends to a wannabe *Jerry Maguire* moment, when Jamie flags down Maggie's coach to declare his love on a motorway lay-by, in a scene so predictable that it doesn't have you at hello or any point thereafter. The movie may be about Viagra but its final act is decidedly limp.

◆◆ **Kate Stables**

Credits for this film were unavailable at the time of going to press and will be published in the February issue



Layers: Anne Hathaway



Rome, open city: Nicole Grimaudo, Riccardo Scamarcio

SYNOPSIS Ohio, 1996. Underachieving lothario Jamie trains as a pharmaceutical salesman, learning to bribe and sweet-talk his way into doctors' offices. Masquerading as an intern, he meets acerbic Parkinson's sufferer Maggie. They begin a relationship based on casual sex, but her ex, rival rep Trey, warns him off. Despite a shared reluctance to commit, Maggie and Jamie fall in love. Jamie starts to sell the new erectile dysfunction drug Viagra, very successfully. After Jamie is advised that staying with Maggie as her condition worsens is a mistake, they tour the country consulting specialists. Maggie breaks up with Jamie, telling him he is scared to love her without a cure.

Jamie lands the Chicago sales job he has coveted. Deciding he wants Maggie more, he tracks her down and declares his love. He quits his job, applies to medical school, and they move in together.



Dutch courage: Carice van Houten

Love Life

The Netherlands/
United Kingdom 2009

Director: Reinout Oerlemans
With Carice van Houten, Barry
Atsma, Anna Drijver, Jeroen Willems

Dutch director Reinout Oerlemans's debut feature broke box-office records when it was released recently in the Netherlands. A tale of the destruction wrought on a relationship by terminal illness, it's many things – a psychologically barren soap opera and a stylistic bore among them. But for a mainstream film on such a subject, it does deviate slightly from the normal tear-duct squeezing formula.

"Love in times of cancer has its own rules," confides thirtysomething ad executive Stijn as he embarks on yet another affair, unbeknown to his dying wife Carmen. Based on the bestselling autobiographical novel by Raymond van de Klundert, *Love Life* sends the audience's moral compass spinning with its suggestion that when the pressures of nursing a loved one become too much, infidelity can provide a necessary sanctuary.

To his credit, Oerlemans never sides with either character. Narrated by Stijn, this is his story, and he is largely an unsympathetic love rat throughout. But while we might not condone his actions, we do understand them. Strong performances disguise a lot of the film's flaws, especially Carice van Houten's turn as Carmen, whose feelings and motivations aren't given much screentime. Meanwhile Barry Atsma

as Stijn wisely lets his designer stubble do most of the talking and copes admirably with spending much of the film slumped in dark, shadowy corners looking distraught.

The problem is that Oerlemans never really delves any deeper than he has to. The couple's whirlwind romance is straight out of Stijn's portfolio, the whispers and lingering glances resembling a perfume ad. Roos, the object of Stijn's affections, is just that and nothing else. Meanwhile the couple's young daughter Luna is totally ignored until she's needed to turn on the waterworks in the soggy finale.

The main offender, though, is the blaring soundtrack. Close your eyes and you'd still know what's happening: there's a bit of jazz when everything's tickety-boo, a melancholic piano when it's not. Hear some thumping beats and you know Stijn's getting horny. Indeed, Oerlemans's camera spends far too long spying on Roos and Stijn's bedroom antics. The realities of cancer are all there – the burns, bile and hair loss, but love itself doesn't get much of a look in. **Isabel Stevens**

CREDITS

Director
Reinout Oerlemans

Producers
Hans de Weers
Reinout Oerlemans

Screenplay
Gert Embrechts
Based on the novel
*Komt een Vrouw bij de
Dokter* [A Woman Goes
to the Doctor] by
Kluun [i.e. Raymond van
de Klundert]
**Director of
Photography**
Lennert Hilleg

Editor
Michiel Reichwein
Production Designer
Harry Ammerlaan
Music
Chrisnanne Wiegelt
Melcher Meijmans
Merlijn Snitker

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Drama B.V.
**Production
Companies**
Goldcrest Films
presents a film by
Eyeworks Film & TV
Drama in co-operation

with Inspire Pictures
In collaboration with
RTL Entertainment
With the support of
Suppletie-regeling van
het Nederlands Fonds
voor de Film, Nationale
Postcode Loterij, Inspire
Pictures, Eyeworks
Holding
Executive Producers
Bert Nijdam
Ronald van Wechem
**Co-executive
Producers**
Clea de Koning
Danielle Guirguis
Co-producer
Sim van Veen
Line Producers
Erwin Godschalk
California Crew LA:
Patricia McMahon

Production Managers
Joris van Seggelen
California Crew:
Eric Tu
Tahiti/Le Taha'a Crew:
Christine Tisseau
Giraudel
Paris Crew:
Xavier Legris
**Production
Co-ordinators**
Lotte Gerding
California Crew:
Ash Marshall
**Production
Accountants**
Shekhar Kewalbansing
Sabine Schluter
Arie Bos
Location Managers
Dick Engelbracht
Central Amsterdam:
Robert Post
California Crew:

Don Mann
Jennifer Sanchez
Paris Crew:
Maxime Brun
**Post-production
Co-ordinators**
Arjan Eekels
Marja Paepers
Assistant Directors
1st: Marc van der Bijl
2nd: Mariette van
Sisseren
Script Supervisor
Machteld Feltmann
Casting
Rebecca van Uhen
Script Contributors
Reinout Oerlemans
Kluun
Liesbeth Wiegiers
Mischa Alexander
Camera Operators
2nd Unit
Reinout Steenhuisen
Rolf Dekens
Flip Bleekrode
Luc Zonnenberg
Steadicam Operators
François Pernier
Michael Monteiro
Gaffers
Mark Bakker
2nd Unit:
Erwin Roodhart
Key Grip
Jan Willem Biemans
Visual Effects
Goeroe Post
Special Effects
Harry Wiessenhaan
Ricky Wiessenhaan
Edward Wiessenhaan
Roland Goddijn
Nick van Leeuwen
Set Decorator
Janitien Wijk
Costume Designers
Marian Van
Nieuwenhuyzen
Marion Boot
Make-up/Hair
Gerda Koekoek
**Special Make-up
Effects**
Rob Hillenbrink
Erik Hillenbrink
Title Sequence
Goeroe Post
Music Arranger
Peter Schön
Soundtrack
"Start It Up" – Robben
Ford; "Rain down on
Me" – Tiesto featuring
Kane; "In de
maneschijn"; "You See
the Trouble with Me" –
Black Legend; "Señor, la
cuenta, por favor!" – De
5 Fluitjes; "Satisfaction"
– Benny Benassi
presents "The Biz";
"Stabat Mater, versie
1876 voor soloisten,

koor en piano,
Movements I, II, V" by
Antonin Dvorák; "Love
over Healing"
Sound Designer
Jan Willem van den
Brink
Sound Recordist
Eddy de Cloe
Sound Mixer
Jan Willem van den
Brink
Sound Editors
Tom Bijnen
Gabor Verhoeven
René Overhorst
Stunt Co-ordinator
Marco Maas

CAST

Carice van Houten
Carmen
Barry Atsma
Stijn
Anna Drijver
Roos
Jeroen Willems
Frenk
Sacha Bulthuis
Doctor Schellerna
**Gijs Scholten van
Aschat**
Doctor Jonkman
Pierre Bokma
family doctor
Walid Benmbarek
Ramon
Yfke Wegman
Luna aged 6
Isabelle Moerman
Luna aged 3
Bepie Melissen
Carmen's mother
Mark Scholten
Thomas
Wendell Jaspers
Anne
Eva Smid
Maud
Steeff Cuijpers
taxi driver
Dirk Zeelenberg
estate agent
Hilke Bierman
Jeanine
Fleur Vosse
dancer in dream
David Lucieer
doctor's assistant
Anne Marie Michels
Esther
Viviane Windgassen
Carol

**Dolby Digital
In Colour
[2.35:1]
Subtitles**

Distributor
Yellow Knife Releasing

SYNOPSIS Amsterdam, the present. Ad executive and serial womaniser Stijn falls in love with co-worker Carmen. After a whirlwind romance, they marry. Carmen discovers that Stijn has been unfaithful. He professes that she is the only woman he loves and so she tolerates his infidelities. They have a daughter, Luna, and move to the suburbs. Stijn sets up his own ad agency with his friend Frenk. Carmen is diagnosed with breast cancer. Stijn looks after her while she receives chemotherapy and radiation treatment and eventually has her breast removed. The couple drift apart. Stijn starts a relationship with artist Roos. Carmen is given the all-clear by the doctors; she starts to suspect that Stijn is seeing someone else and asks him to stop. Stijn confesses to Frenk that he is unsure whether he still loves Carmen. Frenk urges him to break up with Roos and he does so. Carmen and Stijn go on holiday to try to fix their relationship. Carmen discovers that Roos is still contacting Stijn; when she asks Stijn if he still loves her, he is unable to answer. She demands a divorce. However, after getting drunk together later, they make up and he agrees never to see Roos again.

On their return, they discover that Carmen's cancer has spread and she has six months to live. They both give up their jobs and decide to enjoy the time they have left together. As Carmen's health deteriorates, Stijn finds it hard to cope and starts seeing Roos again. Carmen finds out, and both she and Luna are angry with him. After breaking down and crashing his car, Stijn commits himself to caring for Carmen. As her condition worsens, she decides (legally) to terminate her life.

Stijn invites Roos to Carmen's funeral. Stijn and Luna travel abroad, opening the box of items Carmen has collected for Luna.



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CINEMA**

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Mammoth

Sweden/Denmark/
Germany/Norway 2009
Director: Lucas Moodysson
With Gael García Bernal,
Michelle Williams, Marife Necesito
Certificate 15 125m 25s

Lukas Moodysson has gone global. Banished is the formal experimentation of his last movie *Container*; and the feelbad element of its predecessor, the outré provocation of *A Hole in My Heart*, has been tempered. *Mammoth*, his first English-language star-cast project, applies a passive traveller's eye and flies us off in several directions at once: from the swish Manhattan nest of the Vidales family to the bloody, social wake-up call of a metropolitan ER room; to the poverty and economic injustice of the abandoned Manila family of the Vidales' Filipino nanny Gloria (the superb Marife Necesito); and the sexual exploitation and polluted air of Thailand's capital and its seemingly paradisiacal islands.

What Moodysson's aim in *Mammoth* seems to be is to find a way to illustrate both global human connectedness and its ironic corollary – how geographic, social and economic inequalities and injustices affect individual interactions and personal relationships within and across those divides, as seen primarily from the microscopic view of the individual family but also from the more macroscopic perspective afforded by global travel. What we get is a socially conscious movie masquerading as a family melodrama, a would-be *Rebel without a Cause* that tries to garner sympathy not for Eisenhower's angry, alienated 1950s youth but rather – as presented in the privileged figures of fashionable, well-intentioned website designer Leo Vidales (Gabriel García Bernal) and his progressive but highly paid surgeon wife Ellen (Michelle Williams) – the guilt, dissatisfaction and disconnectedness of the most putatively successful and upwardly mobile high achievers

of the Bush generation. It's a big ask.

If that ambition bangs up against compassion fatigue – and questions about the film's equal dispensation of sympathy for the 'suffering' Third World and the 'guilty' First – Moodysson's strategies make it worse. The continual crosscutting between three (necessarily sketchy) stories tends to preclude identification with the characters in any of them. At the same time, not only is the focus lost but so is the intensity. If Moodysson has hitherto been a master director of rooms – those confined social crucibles where people ferment their relationships or experiment with their identities – then here, where he seems to want to throw the doors and windows wide open to gaze on our little blue planet in the round (literally so when Jackie, the Vidales' daughter, visits the Hayden Planetarium), he is far less comfortable. In addition, his English scripting leads to some infelicities in the dialogue: young Jackie peering through elevator doors – "I can't see anything. Only darkness!" – seems overly portentous, while much of the halted conversation between Leo and pretty prostitute Cookie (Run Srinikornchot) can feel either patronising or clichéd. Likewise, the golden washes or chromatic sheens with which cinematographer Marcel Zyskind imbues the Thai seascapes or ritzy hotel rooms introduces a sense of sentimentality and seduction at strange odds with the film's ostensible ethical purposes.

That said, *Mammoth*'s patent sincerity, emotional honesty and inherent campaigning zeal give it much compensatory appeal. Also, Moodysson's sympathetic direction of actors, not least of children, results in some moving, if discreet, performances. He probes interestingly at the vulnerability and depth yet to be fully expressed by Michelle Williams – squirming in her bed alone; he finds a qualifying streak of cruelty and offhand callousness in Bernal; and with Necesito he helps nurture a fine portrait of mute self-denial. He shows, too, that his parsimonious background in productions with Sweden's Memfis



Williams, Bernal, Nyweide

and Denmark's Zentropa wasn't wasted, turning out quite an expensive-looking movie on a \$10 million budget. A film of only occasional moment, it must be accounted a misfire, but an honourable one. ♦♦ **Wally Hammond**

CREDITS

Directed by
Lukas Moodysson
Produced by
Lars Jönsson
Written by
Lukas Moodysson
Director of Photography
Marcel Zyskind
Film Editor
Michał Leszczyński
Production Designer
Josefin Åsberg
Composers
Jesper Kurlandsky
Erik Holmquist
Linus Gierla

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Production Companies
Memfis Film presents
Produced by Memfis Film Rights 6 AB in co-production with Zentropa EntertainmentS ApS, Zentropa Entertainment Berlin GmbH

Also in co-production with Film i Väst, Sveriges Television (SVT), TV2 Denmark Supported by Swedish Film Institute (Peter 'Pjodor' Gustavsson), Eurimages, Nordic Film & TV Fund (Hanna Palmquist), Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg GmbH, Filmförderungsanstalt, Danish Film Institute (Lena Hansson-Varhegyi), MEDIA Programme of the European Community
Production Service Companies: Memfis Filmproduktion AB, Zentropa EntertainmentS ApS, Santa International Film Productions Co Ltd, R.S. Video & Film Productions
Executive Producers
Lene Børglum
Peter Garde
Vibeke Windeløv

Co-producers
Peter Aalbæk Jensen
Maria Köpf
Gunnar Carlsson
Tomas Eskilsson
Line Producer
Malte Forssell
Production Managers
Madeleine Ekman
Thailand Crew:
Awel Galang
Production Supervisors
Anita Tesler
Thailand Crew:
Pam Plodip
NY Crew:
Izabela Muchlinski
Production Co-ordinators
Manuela Rossing
Thailand Crew:
'Onn' Sathanee
Kladkaew
Thailand Crew:
Tess Mann
Thailand Crew On-set:
Marty Mase
Thailand Crew:
Patric Hjeltn
Sara Waldeck
Accountants
Pia Janols
Sabina Österling
Anna Waden
Ida Jensen
Filmekonomi AB
Location Managers
Thailand Crew:
'Lek' Nitad Srisomsap
Thailand Crew:
Chriz Soriano
NY Crew:
Suk Yi Mar
Head of Post-production
Peter Bengtsson
Assistant Directors
Chief: Malin Fornander
1st: James Velasquez
Thailand Crew:
(Lena) Kong Yanuaka
Thailand Crew:
2nd: Andy Andico
Thailand Crew:
2nd: Abbe Hassan
2nd: Hanne Lassgård
NY Crew:
2nd: Steve Litwitz
Continuity
Malin Fornander
Lidija Aleksandrov
Casting
Avy Kaufman
Europe/Asia:
Jesper Kurlandsky
Thailand Crew –
Bangkok:
Jirati Chaiyasang

Casting Supervisor
Thailand Crew:
Julie Isla
Gaffers
Jacob Marlow
Thailand Crew:
Chesda 'Pop' Smithsuth
Thailand Crew:
Gerry Dano
Key Grip
Thailand Crew:
Bulch Abrillo
Visual Effects
Filmgate
Art Director
Thailand Crew:
'Som' Ausorn
Muskbutr
Set Decorators
Thailand Crew:
Rasant Phepong
NY Crew:
Jade Healy
Props Master
Thailand Crew:
Somchaj Chinsinukul
Construction Managers
Thailand Crew:
'Jeed' Prasan
Petchpong
Trollhättan Crew:
Klas Jansson
Costume Designer
Denise Östholm
Wardrobe Set Supervisor
Eleonor Fahlen
Make-up/Hair Designer
Linda Boije af Gennäs
Special Effects
Trollhättan Crew:
Love Larson
Main/End Credits
Fellow Designers
Paul Kuhlhorn
Eva Liljefors
Music Supervisor
Rasmus Thord
Soundtrack
'Beatus Vir Op.38' by
Henryk Górecki – Nikita
Storoyev Choir, Prague
Philharmonic Choir,
Czech Philharmonic
Orchestra; 'The
Greatest' – Cat Power;
'International Dateline';
'Destroy Everything You
Touch'; 'Versus' –
Ladytron; 'Boga';
'Sogg'; 'Lupina' –
Ariana; 'House of
Cards' – Radiohead;
'Motherless Child' –
Boney M.; 'Only U' –
Ashanti; 'Seventh
Heaven'; 'Urban Raw'
Sound Designer
Hans Möller
Sound Recording
Henric Andersson
Niclas Merits
Re-recording Mixers
Holger Lehmann
Hans Möller
Technical Adviser
Trollhättan Crew:
Rutger Andersson
Medical Advisers
Trollhättan Crew:
Mehmosh Sharivar
Sarah Marlow
NY Crew:
Dr Lorraine Cashin
Dr Melvin E. Stone Jr

CAST

Gael García Bernal
Leo Vidales
Michelle Williams
Ellen Vidales
Marife Necesito
Gloria, nanny
Sophie Nyweide
Jackie Vidales
Run Srinikornchot
Cookie
Tom McCarthy
Robert 'Bob' Sanders
Jan Nicdao
Salvador

Martin Delos Santos
Manuel
Maria Del Carmen
grandmother
Perry Dizon
Fernando
Dona Croll
Alice
Joseph Mydell
Ben Jackson
Caesar Kobb
Anthony
Matthew James Ryder
Bob Sanders' colleague
Piomya Sootrak
Cookie's daughter
Pasakorn Mahakanok
Porn
Thanita Nitna-Na-Nan
Pim
Ian Stevens
guy 1
Rune Kippervik
guy 2
Peter Tuinstra
guy 3
Pennapa Udomsin
massage woman
Ofelia B. Ruivivar
sari san saleswoman
Attakorn Kauchat
van driver
Winai Kasikdon
taxi driver
Khomsak Yala
man in bar
Shatshaj Yala
bearded man
Sama-Ann Kasikdon
bungalow man
Sunaa
beach salesman
Nigel Rogers
Western man
Raul Morit
man finding Salvador
Greg Schroeder
man at square
Tirso Sotelo
fisherman
Mario Sumagui
priest
Julie Ysla
neighbour
Drew Ernst
client in shop
Marilyn Cea
woman behind bar
Michelle Collins
Sarah Marlow
Mehmosh Sharivar
Rajfa Duzic
nurses
David Hagman
Thomas Forsberg
Bryan Gliniski
Anita Sihlberg
paramedics
Maurice Herbert
Zana Penjweni
Elmira Arkan
Blanche Ona
trauma team
Tony Wedgwood
speaker
Dolby Digital In Colour
[2.35:1]
Part-subtitled
Distributor
Soda Pictures
11,287 ft + 4 frames
Swedish/Danish/
German/Norwegian
theatrical title
Mammut

SYNOPSIS Ellen, a workaholic ER surgeon, and Leo, a rich website games developer, live in a well-appointed New York apartment with their bright seven-year-old daughter Jackie and her Filipino nanny Gloria. Leo leaves for Thailand with colleague Robert, hoping to sign a multimillion-dollar contract; delays lead to a protracted stay overseas. Ellen suffers from insomnia, a reaction to her stressful job, which has led to many of her maternal duties being left to her surrogate Gloria, towards whom she develops a resentful jealousy. Gloria takes Jackie to the Hayden Planetarium and starts teaching the child her native Tagalog language. Gloria receives repeated calls from the Philippines from her own child, 10-year-old Badong, expressing how much he and his younger brother miss her, and appealing for her to come home. Badong shows his brother the house, half-completed, that his mother is attempting to fund. Badong makes repeated unsuccessful attempts to find paid work.

Leo, grown impatient and alienated waiting in his five-star hotel, takes a trip to an island beach hut, where he poses as a drop-out ex-firefighter and meets prostitute Cookie. Ellen becomes unprofessionally attached to a seriously ill young patient, Anthony. Badong's grandmother takes him on a cautionary visit to see scavengers on the local refuse dumps; in telling him indirectly about the work of child prostitutes, she inadvertently gives the boy ideas. Leo finally sleeps with Cookie but returns soon afterwards to Bangkok. Badong is mugged by child prostitutes in the city centre; he is led away by an American tourist and later found seriously injured. Gloria flies home immediately, telling her hospitalised son she will stay for good. Anthony dies in surgery, causing Ellen to break down.

Leo flies home. Reunited with his family, he declares a moment of perfect happiness.

Megamind

Director: Tom McGrath

Voices of Will Ferrell, Brad Pitt, Tina Fey, Jonah Hill

Certificate PG 95m 32s

A superhero parody, DreamWorks' computer-animated *Megamind* operates in such an overworked genre that it has to become a joke about being the umpteenth iteration of the superhero story. Surprisingly, it makes a fairly decent joke of it. One inspiration seems to be a series of Chuck Jones cartoons made between 1953 and 1963, in which a sheepdog and wolf engaged in various crazy battles (the wolf always lost). However, we also saw them exchange courtesies as they punched their timecards at the beginning and end of each day. The meta-joke, of course, was that their whole story *raison d'être* was to fight, as much as it is for Batman and the Joker, or for Sherlock Holmes and Moriarty.

Megamind proposes that the very worst situation for a supervillain is if he wins the game. The first act retells the Superman story; in this version, Superman is a smug poseur called Metro Man, voiced by Brad Pitt, who follows tradition by escaping a dying alien world as a baby. One change to the story is that the villain Megamind (Will Ferrell) is now an alien as well, with bright-blue skin. However, he still has the huge dome-forehead of Superman's human foe Lex Luthor. (J.J. Abrams once proposed making Luthor an alien, drawing howls from fans.)

Megamind kidnaps the Lois Lane heroine, renamed as the equally

alliterative Roxanne Ritchi (Tina Fey). The hero, villain and 'distressed' damsel have plainly been going through their motions forever, leading to a mildly amusing routine where Megamind desperately tries scaring the blasé Roxanne with increasingly ridiculous devices. Metro Man comes to save the day... and Megamind accidentally kills him, shocking the villain more than anyone else.

Consequently, Megamind must become a one-man show, playing every role himself. Thus he disguises himself as a Clark Kent character to woo Roxanne, falling for her (and having to fight 'himself' at one point for her benefit). Then he must become father to a 'new' superhero, and when that goes wrong, he must finally play Metro Man. Of course, none of this is new. For example, it's a cliché in Sherlock Holmes fan circles that Moriarty could be the jaded sleuth in disguise.

Megamind is essentially an in-joke, whereas Pixar's superhero animation *The Incredibles* (2004) succeeded because its starter question – what if society didn't want Superman or his powers? – resonated beyond the genre into middle-aged angst. The saving grace of the amiably amusing *Megamind* – apart, that is, from the nimble dynamism that 3D animation lends to its tower-leaping flights and fights – turns out to be Megamind himself. When he's not cackling and grandstanding, the DreamWorks animators do a fine job of making the big-headed freak seem plaintively human, in a way they never quite managed with Shrek.

◆◆ Andrew Osmond

Credits for this film were unavailable at the time of going to press and will be published in the February issue

Miral

France/Israel/Italy/India 2010

Director: Julian Schnabel

With Hiam Abbass, Freida Pinto, Yasmine Al Massri, Ruba Blal

Certificate 12A 112m 24s

Miral, an earnest, episodic melodrama about four Arab-Israeli women whose lives are affected by the momentous political upheavals beginning in Palestine in 1948, shows artist-turned-filmmaker Julian Schnabel making a decisive move away from his established auteurist template. He is famous for intense dramatised memoirs of beleaguered and egotistical artists, from *Basquiat's* art-world satire through the controversial character study of *Before Night Falls* and – his crowning achievement – the elegant, funny, tragic interior world he created for *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*, which showed him harnessing his visual panache to great empathetic effect. His creative palette is a far more problematic fit for this history-is-herstory adaptation of Palestinian journalist Rula Jebreal's memoir, which tags a fictionalised version of her own radical youth as 'Miral' on to the end of a chain of women struggling fruitfully or self-destructively with what history has dealt them.

But the exuberant acuity that Schnabel brought to portraying gay persecution under Castro, or locked-in syndrome, is somehow absent here, and the film opts for a visually and emotionally lush but simplistic take on a complex political problem. Not to say that the Arab-Israeli conflict can't be tackled with great creativity on film (Eli Suleiman's quirkily absurdist 2009 black comedy *The Time That Remains* covers similar territory with breathtaking audacity) but Schnabel seems significantly less at home with this kind of material. He is saddled with Jebreal's cumbersome narrative, whose exposition-heavy initial account of young philanthropist Hind Hussein's 1948 establishment of a school for Palestinian orphan girls jerks awkwardly into two other lightly connected stories without warning. Indeed, a detour into the terrorist activities of Fatima, Miral's terrorist aunt, seems included expressly to allow Schnabel to make her attempted cinema bombing a homage to *The Battle of Algiers*.

Still, Schnabel's collage visual style attempts to pull these strands together, using his canted or restless camera and solarised colours to unify them in a stream of choppy scenes. This works strikingly well when the film encapsulates the short, miserable life of Miral's mother Nadia as a whirlwind of snapshot sequences, pulling together the bedsprings of her childhood rape, the jiggling amber stomach of her bellydancing and the slooping bright-blue waters of her drowning with an intensity that recalls the first-person POV of *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*. But her character is little more than a gorgeous mist of misery, a problem that besets the film,

whose visuals are infinitely more eloquent than its writing. The rapid changes of story and character have the effect of disengaging the viewer, and the excellent Hiam Abbass can make little more of Hind than a rapidly ageing saint, a woman who, like Mr Chips, "never married. But I have 2,000 daughters." Even when it settles to tell Miral's story at comparative length, Freida Pinto's uncomplicatedly plucky schoolgirl, radicalised by the Ramallah bulldozers and by boyfriend Hani, doesn't reach out and grab us. Put this down to a combination of the film's relentlessly agitprop dialogue ("Settlers are the real cancer") and Pinto being primarily a reactive actress, whose gift for eloquent suffering only comes into its own when Miral is beaten in prison for PLO activism.

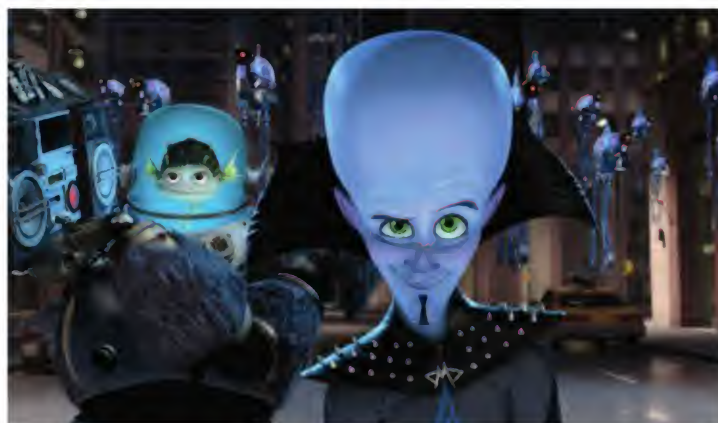
Though he goes at it with typical grandiosity, Schnabel's attempt to mesh the personal and the political in this movie sends it skating across the region's history, never digging into the issues it throws out. It winds up reducing Miral's politicisation to a manufactured choice between ideology and humanity, and itself to a handsomely mounted tract with soap-opera trimmings. ◆◆ Kate Stables

CREDITS

Directed by Julian Schnabel
Produced by Jon Kilik
Screenplay Rula Jebreal
Based on the novel by Rula Jebreal
Director of Photography Eric Gautier
Film Editor Juliette Welfling
Production Designer Yoel Herzberg
Songs by Laurie Anderson
Marcel Khalife
A.R. Rahman
Trio Joubert
Tom Waits
Ennio Morricone

©Pathé Production, ER Productions, Eagle Pictures, India Take One Productions
Production Companies Jérôme Seydoux presents a Pathé, ER Productions, Eagle Pictures, India Take One Productions
A film by Julian Schnabel
Grandview Pictures
Production Services Eran Kilik Productions
Ramallah Crew: Roy Mano
Executive Producers François-Xavier Decroene
Sonia Raule
Co-producers Sebastián Silva
Tarak Ben Ammar
Tabrez Noorani
Line Producers Uzi Karin
Eyal Sadan
Associate Producer Hammoudi Buqai

Unit Production Managers Saar Dattner
Ramallah Crew: Jon Kilik
Production Co-ordinators Dorit Perel
French Crew: Maria Uzelac
Budget Controllers Hadara Czaczkes
French Crew: Laure Blass
Location Managers Guy Raz
Ramallah Crew: Morad Ismael
Post-production Supervisors Virginia Anderson
NY: Luca Borghese
Assistant Directors 1st: Sebastián Silva
2nd: Li-At Heller
2nd: Enas Al-Muthaffer
2nd: Joaquín Silva
Beard
2nd: Maxim Konoplov
Script Supervisor Georgina Asfour
Casting Israel: Yael Aviv
Najwa Mubarki
French Crew: Gérard Moulévrier
Underwater Cameraman Roland Savoye
Camera Operator B: Haim Asias
Gaffer Avi Dasberg
Key Grip Roy Mano
Visual Effects Duran Duboi
Special Effects Pini Klavir
Art Director Nir Alba
Property Master Yotav Dahari
Construction Manager Amiram Lichter
Costume Designer Walid Mawed
Costume Supervisor Li Alernbik
Make-up Design Ziv Kalarov



Hero or villain?: 'Megamind'

SYNOPSIS Two babies escape a cosmic cataclysm, both landing on Earth. One is hugely popular; the other, a blue-skinned, big-headed genius, is always the outsider. They grow up, respectively, into the superhero Metro Man and the supervillain Megamind, fighting to dominate Metro City. Metro Man always wins, until one day Megamind traps him in a dome that happens to be lined with copper. Metro Man claims that copper is his secret weakness, before being (apparently) destroyed. Megamind is victorious over Metro City, but quickly grows bored. He woos reporter Roxanne Ritchi in disguise; she gives him the idea of creating a new hero. He creates a serum from Metro Man's DNA, which is accidentally injected into Hal, Roxanne's nerdy colleague. Not knowing that Hal desires Roxanne, Megamind trains him as a hero. Both Megamind and Hal (now called Tighten) reveal their identities to Roxanne, who rejects them both. Megamind is appalled when Tighten says he'd rather be a villain. Megamind and Roxanne must team up (learning along the way that Metro Man faked his death after tiring of the endless battles with Megamind). Megamind fights Tighten himself, draining his powers. Roxanne and the public embrace Megamind as a superhero.



War baby: Freida Pinto, Omar Metwally

Make-up Artists

Shiran Yamen
Carmil Bouzaglo
Meirav Horovitz
Bouchoucha
Ramallah Crew:
Jomana Farson
Rasha Suleiman
Hair Designers
Sigalit Grau
Eli Almani
Hairdresser
Renato Lev
Credits
Duran Duboi
Music Supervisor
Julian Schnabel
Soundtrack
"Pace apparente" from
La battaglia di Algeri by
Ennio Morricone, Gillo
Pontecorvo; "Rita" –
Marcel Khalife; "Flow",
"Miral 2", "Miral 1", "Miral
3" – Laurie Anderson;
"Water" from *Water*,
"Mumbai Theme Tune"
from *Mumbai* by A.R.
Rahman – A.R.
Rahman; "Safar",
"Masdar" – le Trio
Joubran, Yousef
Hbeisch (percussionist);
"Smoke Gets in Your
Eyes" – Dina
Washington; "L'Art
d'aimer – Shajan" – le
Trio Joubran, Yousef
Hbeisch (percussionist),
Mahmoud Darwich
(vocal); "Carbon" –

Laure Anderson, Lou
Reed; "So Sad about
Us"; "Carol's Walk";
"Taqasim" – Marcel
Khalife (oud); "Rollin' &
Tumblin' (Remix)" – R.L.
Burnside; "Down There
by the Train"; "Lost in the
Harbour" – Tom Waits
Sound Recordist
Ashi Milo
Adam Wolny
Dominique Gaborieau
Sound Recordist
Ramallah Crew:
Yves-Marie Omnes
Co-mixer
Damien Lazzarini
Stunt Co-ordinator
Dima Osmolovsky
Film Extracts
Repulsion (1965)

CAST

Hiam Abbass
Hind Hussein
Freida Pinto
Miral
Yasmine Al Massri
Nadia
Ruba Blal
Fatima
Alexander Siddig
Jamal
Omar Metwally
Hani
Stella Schnabel
Lisa
Willem Dafoe
Eddie

Vanessa Redgrave
Bertha Spafford
Asma Al Shiukhy
Neemeh Khalil
women wrapping body
Jameel Khoury
Brother Amin
Basel Hussein
Brother Khalid
Hanna Shammass
Ibrahim Hussein
Hazem Said
Hussein brothers
Makram J. Khoury
Governor Khatib
Wadea Khoury
Hind's mother
Virginia Amsis
young girl at Christmas
party
Ansam Qupti
other girl at Christmas
party
Fadi Shahen
Raed Said
Jamal Said
Mahmod Debb
musicians at Christmas
party performing "The
Door of Jerusalem"
Huda Al Imam
governor's wife
Butros Copty
older guest
Jude Amous
Zeina
Abdallah El-Ackel
Deir Yassin boy
Miral Hasna
Deir Yassin girl
Murad Shaheen
Deir Yassin crying child

Fatma El-Akel
Deir Yassin little girl
Mahmoud Abu Jazi
teacher Mustafa
Najwa Mubarki
teacher Nawal
Amjad Barakat
hotel director
Juliano Merr Khamis
Sheik Saabah
Milad Mattar
adviser
Uri Avrahami
Israeli adoption officer
Fatma Yahia
young Tamam
Shmil Ben Ari
stepfather
Salwa Nakkara
Nadia's mother
Rami Heuberger
belly dance club
customer
Dov Navon
Yossi
Liron Levo
man on bus
Liat Akta
woman on bus
Tsofit Shpan
woman prisoner
Muraz Aljube
Jordanian soldier
Adel Abou-Raya
hospital officer
Anan Akawi
Maher
Uri Klauzner
ticket man
Hai Maor
soldier in cinema

Pini Mittelman
Fatima's judge
Sanaa Ali
Hawwa
Hind Halabi
Jamal's mother
Saeed Gazzawi
wedding sheik
Ziad Bakri
Helmi
Yolanda El-Karam
young Miral
Samir Qawasm
little Leila
Sama Boullata
little Hadil
Sama Abu-Khdair
Hala Kurd
little Aziza
Rajaie Khateeb
tourist guide
Rana Al Qawasm
Leila
Frida Elraheb
Hadil
Mustaz Welteadi
boy at refugee camp
Mohammad Welteadi
Rami, kid at class
Oz Zehavi
soldier at refugee camp
Iman A'Oun
Hani's mother
Faten Khoury
school secretary
Adnan Tarabshi
Hadil's uncle
Rozzen Bisharat
Yasmin
Shredy Jabarin
Ali
Ashraf Farah
Ashraf
Hanin Halabi
girl on bus
Roy Gurai
Doron Ben-David
soldiers on bus
Zohar Strauss
arresting policeman
Uri Gabriel
interrogating officer
Ruth Cats
torture woman
Ami Weinberg
Miral's judge
Yoav Levy
Miral's prosecutor
Munther Fahmi
Miral's lawyer
Rawda
Tamam

Doraid Liddawi
Samir
Sharon Alexander
Lisa's father
Firas Abo Alnor
soldier at check point
François Abou Salem
Gasper
DNA doctor
Abed Zua'Bi
man at funeral
Amit Bar-Am
Ibrahim Firawi
Vito Schnabel
secret police at hotel
Lana Zreik
Sara
François-Xavier
Decraene
French client
Jawhara Baker
Samar Hilal
Anis Nacrou
Nina Burleigh
journalists at American
colony
Dolby Digital
In Colour/Black and
White
[2.35:1]
Part-subtitled
Distributor
Pathé Distribution
10,116 ft +2 frames

Monsters

United Kingdom 2010

Director: Gareth Edwards

With Scoot McNairy, Whitney Able

Certificate 12A 93m 40s

Monsters is our Film of the Month and is reviewed on p56.

CREDITS

Directed by
Gareth Edwards
Produced by
Allan Niblo
James Richardson
Written by
Gareth Edwards
Director of
Photography
Gareth Edwards
Editor
Colin Goudie
Production Designer
Gareth Edwards
Music
Jon Hopkins

Location Managers

Costa Rica:
Hugo Roque
USA:
Jose Hernandez
Post-production
Supervisor
Rebekka Garrido
Script Editor
Toby Rushton
Visual Effects
Gareth Edwards
Associate Editor
Anne Goudie
End Credits
Florian Obrecht
Music Supervisor
Lol Hammond
Soundtrack
"El Cascabel" –
Conjuntos Tlaxiucanay
Medellin; "Mi Amor",
"Muchos Mescal",
"Letter from Mexico",
"Business in Mexico" –
Eva Abraham, Andy
Watenworth; "Arriba
Tequila"; "Ramon
Ramirez" – Eva
Abraham, Andy
Watenworth, trumpet by
Lloyd Perrin
Sound Designer
Jürgen Funk
Sound Recordist
Ian MacLagan
Re-recording Mixer
Matthias Schwab

©Vertigo Slate
Production Company
Vertigo Films presents a
Gareth Edwards film
Executive Producers
Nigel Williams
Nick Love
Rupert Preston
Line Producer
Jim Spencer
Unit Production
Manager
Costa Rica:
Victor Barriga
Production Manager
Verity Oswin
Production
Co-ordinator
Alyson Penigelly

SYNOPSIS A NASA space probe carrying organisms from one of the moons of Jupiter crashes in Central America, infecting a large swathe of Mexico with huge alien creatures. When magazine publisher's daughter Sam is injured in an accident south of the Infected Zone, her father instructs freelance photographer Andrew to check that Sam is OK, then escort her to the nearest port to board a ferry back to the US. Their train fails to get through, but Andrew and Sam complete the journey to the port on foot, hitchhiking and by bus, arriving just in time to buy (for a vastly inflated amount) a ticket on the final ferry out. They spend the evening but not the night together.

Andrew subsequently goes out drinking, ending up with a local girl who steals his documents, including Sam's passport. Left with no alternative, the pair buy themselves a passage through the Infected Zone by bartering Sam's engagement ring. They travel first by boat, then with a group of heavily armed guerrillas, until a monster attack leaves them to fend for themselves. They make it over the protective wall between the US and Mexico, only to find the Texas Gulf Coast deserted. Narrowly escaping a further monster attack, Sam and Andrew finally admit their feelings for one another before being picked up by the US Army.

SYNOPSIS Palestine 1948. Young Hind Hussein founds a boarding school for Palestinian orphan girls in east Jerusalem, which she runs for 40 years.

Raped by her father as a child, Nadia is imprisoned as a young woman after arguing with an Israeli on a Jerusalem bus. In prison she meets Fatima, a nurse politicised by the Six Day War. Fatima attempts to bomb a Jerusalem cinema. She marries Fatima's brother but, unhappy and alcoholic, eventually drowns herself, leaving a small daughter, Miral.

Miral joins Hind's school. As a teen teaching in a Ramallah refugee camp, she is horrified by bulldozings during the Intifada. Rescued on a peace march by young PLO leader Hani, she dates him and is radicalised. Arrested by Israeli police seeking Hani, she is beaten in custody. While exiled to Haifa she befriends her cousin's Jewish girlfriend Lisa. Back in Jerusalem, Hani is reviled as a traitor for seeing a two-state solution as viable. Before dying, Miral's father reveals that she is not his child. Miral decides to be a journalist after sneaking into the 1993 Oslo peace talks. The dying Hind arranges a college scholarship to Italy for Miral.

CAST

Scoot McNairy
Andrew Kaulder
Whitney Able
Samantha 'Sam'
Wynden

featured extras
Mario Zúñiga
Benavides
ticket seller
Annalee Jefferies
homeless woman
Justin Hall
Ricky Catter
Raul Archer
Kerry Valderrema
Jonathan Winnford
Stan Wong
Anthony Cristo
Mario Richardson
Jorge Quirs
Erick Arce
Emigo Munkel
Esteban Blanco
marines
Victor Vejan
Christopher Chararria
Roman Bustamante
Solomon Albarran
Alejandro Sotero
Victorino Angulo
David Alba Garcia
Eduardo Guizak
Alfonso Pineda
Jose Garcia Gomez
guerrillas
Erika Morales Yolanda
Chacon
mother, 'Erika', Bocoyna
Elsa Rascon Gonzalez
grandmother, Bocoyna
Jose Luis Morales
Chacon
Tamilez Morales
Chacon
Jonathan Cadena
Chacon
Cindy Vanessa Cadena
Morales
children of family,
Bocoyna
Javier Acosta
Rodriguez
taxi driver
Victor Manuel
Martinez Tovar
boat skipper
Walter Hernandez Col
boat assistant
Kenedy Gamaliel
Jimenez
driver of pick-up truck to
The Zone
Hugo Valverde
motorbike driver
Roberto Saluzan
Cesario Solano
ambulance guys
Aris Martinez
Claudia Valdez
nurses in maternity
ward
Elizabeth Blanco
Sanchez
main receptionist at
hospital
Gloria Soza
2nd receptionist at
hospital
Aura Escobar
3rd receptionist at
hospital
Max Alfredo Coe Tux
Ivan Sanchez
policemen at Ceibal
guarding oil barrel
Wilfredo Hernandez
Alvarado
Ramon Otzoy Sucuc
policemen guarding
barrier
Erma Bradley
lady holding daughter in
flood
Shelmar Bradley
boy in pink top
Luis Cails Sosa Carlos
driver of red pick-up
truck
Rene Moreno Lopez
passenger in red pick-up
truck

Kenia Guadalupe
Dominluez Yarnas
little girl in pick-up truck
Jesus Jose Moreno
Quezada
boy playing soccer
Marta Maria Acatilla
Vasquez
corn seller
Romeo Arista
whistle blower
Maria Luisa Ontanon
Refugio Tapia Rendon
dead women in jungle
Katerine Zuleika
Guizar Tapia
dead girls in jungle
Joagun Salazan
policeman
Anthony Jimenez Jara
little boy riding bike at
store
Luis Roberto Monge
Brenes
Oscar Mario Badilla
Bora
Nestor Herrera
men at bar
Iserias Antouro Morah
barman at harbour
Cooper Smith
voice over for Tommy

Dolby Digital
In Colour
[2.35:1]

Distributor
Vertigo Films

8,430 ft +0 frames

Of Gods and Men

France 2010

Director: Xavier Beauvois
With Lambert Wilson,
Michael Lonsdale, Olivier Rabourdin
Certificate 15 **121m** 56s

"Do you know the Qu'ran?" An expected question perhaps in a film intimately concerned with the impact of Islamist terrorism in Algeria – but not one that usually comes from the lips of a Catholic monk, and certainly not addressed to a terrorist leader with a gun in his hand.

Lambert Wilson's Brother Christian cites a passage which says that the Christian faith is "closest in love" to Islam – a statement with poignant echoes given the current Ground Zero mosque controversy. For although it's the shadow of French, rather than American, imperialism that hangs over *Of Gods and Men*, Xavier Beauvois's film (which is based on real events that took place in Tibhirine in 1996) addresses itself to many situations in which fervid faith takes on destructive proportions. As another monk notes in the film, quoting Pascal, "Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction." The film certainly echoes that sentiment: a graphic scene of Croatian construction workers being enthusiastically slaughtered by Islamic extremists probes their gaping throats, sliced efficiently open, with gruesome detail. Yet this is far from a one-sided portrait: for as the film makes clear, good as well as evil can be taken to extremes in the name of God.

The remote Cistercian monastery around which the narrative centres is home to a group of eight French monks, including leader Christian, medic Luc (Michael Lonsdale) and the ageing

SYNOPSIS Algeria, 1995. In a remote village, a group of French Cistercian monks live in an atmosphere of peace and mutual respect with their Arab neighbours, despite the fact that elsewhere the country is being terrorised by Islamic fundamentalists. When Croatian Christian construction workers are slaughtered by a terrorist group, the government offers the monks military protection, but Brother Christian, the monks' leader, rejects it. His failure to consult the other brothers leads some of them to fear he may have condemned them to death. Shortly afterwards, local terrorists, led by Ali Fayattia, storm the monastery, demanding that Brother Luc, a medic, accompany them. Christian refuses, adding moreover that the monks will not supply them with the medicines much needed by the villagers. He invokes the Qu'ran in support of his position, and Fayattia, with begrudging respect, instructs his men to withdraw. The monks discuss the prospect of leaving the village but agree to bide their time. They ignore an order from the Ministry of the Interior to leave the village, and when a severely injured terrorist is brought to them, Luc treats him. Fayattia is captured and killed by the military; the governor is hostile to Christian and suspects him of complicity. The monks decide to stay. The terrorists ransack the monastery and take all but two of the monks hostage in order to bargain for the release of members of their group. An end title reveals that on 21 May 1996, all the hostages were killed.

Amédée (Jacques Herlin). The brothers have lived symbiotically with the local Muslim community for decades, providing free medical treatment, clothing and advice. They are warmly invited to join in the villagers' religious celebrations, never seeking to convert, while for their part the locals observe their own faith with joy and dignity, shaking their heads in horror at tales of terrorist torture in the nearby town. When the danger arrives closer to home, the monks are far from unwavering in their faith in God or their dedication to the community, yet their decision ultimately to stay put is presented as an act of compassion and duty, and one clearly appreciated by the locals, who describe them as "the branch upon which we perch".

The monks' decision to remain, refusing military protection, cues in the gentlest of thriller narratives as we wait to see if and when the terrorists will strike. While Beauvois takes a lead from Philip Gröning's *Into Great Silence* (2005) with his eloquent, often wordless contemplations of the small details of monastic life, such scenes are interspersed with fast-paced, tightly framed montages

and one or two genuinely stomach-clenching suspense scenes.

If Beauvois risks criticism by placing the white Christian westerners at the centre of his film, consigning the villagers to the margins, the monks' ideology doesn't go untested. The local governor points out that it's their economic and social privilege to choose to stay, while the Arabs desperate to flee cannot (a comment echoed by one elder's observation that while women are being stabbed in Algeria for not wearing the hijab, "mad" French girls are rioting for their right to do so).

Watching *Of Gods and Men*, one can't help but be overwhelmed by its raw humanism, from the desolate keening of a young monk fearing himself abandoned by his God, to the scene in which the monks listen to 'Swan Lake', to the final heartbreaking shot, which doesn't so much end as blow away on the breeze. In many ways, this is the film that Bruno Dumont tried, and failed, to make in *Hadewijch* (2009). A small miracle of a film, it puts so much petty pedantry into humbling proportion, while offering a genuinely progressive vision of faith.

♥ Catherine Wheatley



Love unto death: 'Of Gods and Men'

CREDITS

A film by
Xavier Beauvois
Screenplay
Etienne Cornar
Adaptation/Dialogue
Xavier Beauvois
Etienne Cornar
Director of Photography
Caroline Champetier
Editing
Marie-Julie Maille
Art Director
Michel Barthélemy

©Armada Films, Why Not Productions, France 3 Cinéma

Production Companies

Armada Films and Why Not Productions present a Why Not Productions, Armada Films, France 3 Cinéma co-production with participation of France Télévisions, Canal+, CinéCinéma, Centre National de la Cinématographie et de l'Image Animée in association with Cofinova 6, Soficinéma 6, Cinéma 4

Executive Producers

Martine Cassinelli

Frantz Richard

Executive Producers in Morocco

Irene Production:

Frantz Richard

Jean-David Lefebvre

Production Managers

Thibault Mattei

Khaled Hafad

Production Co-ordination

Ilham Raouf

Post-production Supervisor

Béatrice Mauduit

Assistant Directors

1st: Guillaume Bonnier

Akrame El Meziane

Amine Louadni

Constance Stalla

Zineb Belhaba

Mahmoud Belhacen

Script Supervisor

Agathe Grau

Casting

Brigitte Moidon

Gaffer

Emmanuel Demorgon

Key Grip

Mohamed El Ouardi

Special Effects Crew

Pierre-Olivier Parsin

Bruno Maloberti

Frack Limon

Duparcmeur

Ariane Moreau

Emmanuelle Gauthier

Tamara Walsh

Additional Editor

Julie Duclaux

Set Decorator

Hind Ghazali

Props Buyer

Omar Ouachane

Property Master

Guillaume Deviercy

Construction Manager

Martinus Van Lunen

Costume Designer

Marielle Robaut

Costumes

Alice Cambourmac

Bouazza Waradi

Hair Designer

Eric Monteil

Key Hair Stylist

Zhor Benrarni

Soundtrack

"Seigneur, ouvre mes lèvres"; "Puisqu'il est avec nous" - Philippe Robert; "Voici la nuit"; "Psaume 142 (Comme une terre assoiffée)" - Tamié Abbey; "Nous ne savons pas ton mystère"; "Cantique de

Siméon (Sauve nous Seigneur)" - Lucien Deiss; "Ô Père des lumières" - Marcel Godard; "Le Lac des cygnes (op.20, Moderato)" by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky - RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra
Sound
Jean-Jacques Ferran
Eric Bonnard
Stunt Co-ordinator
Cédric Proust
Monastic Consultant
Henry Quinson

CAST

Lambert Wilson
Christian
Michael Lonsdale
Luc
Olivier Rabourdin
Christophe
Philippe Laudenbach
Célestin
Jacques Herlin
Amédée
Loïc Pichon
Jean-Pierre
Xavier Maly
Michel
Jean-Marie Frin
Paul
Olivier Perrier
Bruno
Sabrina Ouazani
Rabbia
Farid Larbi
Ali Fayattia
Adel Bencherif
terrorist
Benaïssa Ahaouari
Sidi Larbi
Idrissi Karimi
Hadij
Abdellah Chakiri
colonel
Abdelhafid Metalsi
Nouredine
Miloud Khetib
le Wali
Abdallah Moundy
Omar
Goran Kostic
foreman
Stanislav Stanic
Arben Bajraktaraj
Croatian workmen
Zhour Laamri
Sidi Larbi's wife
Raouya
village woman
Farid Bouslam
Ahmed
Chadia Assal
Nouredine's wife
Maria Bouslam
Saloua
Soukaina Bouslam
Saloua's daughter
Adile Bouslam
circumcised boy
Rabii Ben Johail
Saïd Naciri
Hamid Aboutaieb
terrorists
El Alaoui El Hassan
shepherd

On Tour

France/Germany 2010

Director: Mathieu Amalric

With Miranda Colclasure, Suzanne Ramsey, Mathieu Amalric

Few observers of the Young French Cinema of the 1990s could have guessed that one of its favourite actors would achieve such high visibility a decade or so later that he'd start appearing all over the place. At one point, it was unusual to see a French film that didn't feature the puppyish charm of Mathieu Amalric in a lead or walk-on role. It soon became apparent that this was an actor with ambitions for an international career and he began to appear in increasingly prominent roles: a cameo in Steven Spielberg's *Munich* (2005); the lead in Julian Schnabel's *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* (2007); and, in *Quantum of Solace* (2008), playing the least menacing of Bond villains. On top of which, the actor has also nurtured a parallel career as a director, making eight shorts since 1985 and three features since 2000, of which *On Tour* is the first in which he also takes the lead.

Amalric plays Joachim Zand, a former television producer who returns to France after a long sojourn in the US, shepherding a New Burlesque troupe on a tour of coastal towns with the promise of a finale in Paris. His performers, with stage names like 'Dirty Martini' and 'Kitten on the Keys', aren't glossy Dita Von Teese-alikes but curvaceous and tattooed peroxide-blondes, and much of the film's energy is generated by juxtaposing this riotous, good-hearted ensemble with the provincial settings and interchangeable hotels they pass through. In this, *On Tour* is not unlike Xavier Giannoli's underrated *The Singer* (2006), in which Gérard Depardieu delivered one of his best performances in years as a faded chanteur working the small-town circuit in a study of the travails of showbiz life beyond the



The show must go on: Suzanne Ramsey, Linda Marracini

metropolis. And certain clichés of the 'backstage movie' are carefully observed: Zand as the harassed, chain-smoking impresario, constantly juggling a mobile phone and trying to keep the show on the road, with the troupe a surrogate family to replace his sundered relationship with his estranged wife and kids.

On Tour has something to say about the formative dynamic that underlies all French popular culture, its love-hate relationship with America. 'New Burlesque' is, after all, an American import and Zand is a character whose exposure to the States has done nothing to improve his prospects in his native land; he fails spectacularly to call in favours from his successful TV-producer brother and ends up assaulting an influential elderly impresario. It's hard not to interpret elements of the film as a parable, displaced on to the world of theatrical striptease, of the actor-director's own place in French cinema, negotiating the somewhat hermetic and exclusive domain of auteur film and the energetic spectacle of American entertainment. Zand is also a tribute to the figure of the film producer as a tightrope walker. Amalric has stated that the character was partly inspired by the tragic example of buccaneering French producers Jean-Pierre Rassam and Humbert Balsam, who both worked themselves into early graves. The moustache the actor affects for the role is supposedly worn in homage to the unflagging Portuguese art-cinema producer Paolo Branco.

Such meta-cinematic concerns are carefully woven into the film's overall

structure, which is nicely episodic and incidentally dramatic, in keeping with the 'if it's Wednesday it must be Le Havre' itinerary of its travelling players. Amalric's handling of such a structure no doubt contributed to his best director award at the 2010 Cannes film festival and it's here that many of the movie's pleasures reside. When Zand takes off alone to set up the tour's final date in Paris, there's an encounter with a vivacious petrol-station cashier (Aurélia Petit) which touchingly evokes their shared *en passant* yearning. Likewise, when one of the Burlesque girls drags a sexually incompetent software salesman into a hotel toilet, a little Asian girl sitting outside overhears the heated tryst within and innocently wonders, "Are there animals in there?" And while all the performers get a turn in the film, they are often shot from backstage, with the foreground occupied by the chaotic bustle in the wings.

To see Amalric playing Joachim Zand it's hard not to be reminded of Cassavetes's *The Killing of a Chinese Bookie* (1976), in which Ben Gazzara starred as strip-joint owner Cosmo Vitelli, a man who loved all his girls. While *On Tour* settles a little too easily in conclusion for the troupe-as-one-big-family cliché, and Amalric still looks rather too boyish to bring off the grizzled weariness necessary to make Zand completely believable, the film's engaging confidence and inclusive good nature prove he's worth watching both as an actor and a director. **✶✶ Chris Darke**

CREDITS

Directed by
Mathieu Amalric
Produced by
Laetitia Gonzalez
Yael Fogiel
Screenplay
Mathieu Amalric
Philippe Di Folco
Marcelo Novais Teles
Raphaëlle Valbrune
Director of Photography
Christophe Beaucarne
Editor
Annette Dutertre
Art Director
Stéphane Taillan

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CinéCinéma with the support of La Région des Pays de la Loire, La Région Haute-Normandie, Le Département de la Charente-Maritime, La Région Poitou-Charentes in partnership with CNC in association with Sofica EuropaCorp and Sofica Coficup (a Backup Films fund) A Les Films du Poisson production in co-production with Neue Mediopolis Filmproduktion (Alexander Ris, Petra Hengge and Jörg Roth), ARTE France Cinéma, WDR/ARTE, Le Pacte, Film(s) in association with Sofica EuropaCorp, Sofica Coficup (a Backup Films fund) with the participation of CNC (Centre national de la cinématographie et de l'image animée, Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication), FFA - Filmförderungsanstalt, Canal+ and

CinéCinéma With the support of La Région des Pays de la Loire, fonds d'aide Région Haute-Normandie in association with Le Pôle Image Haute-Normandie, Le Département de la Charente-Maritime and La Région Poitou-Charentes with the support of the MEDIA Programme of the European Community and PROCIREP

Production Manager
Frédéric Blum

Post-production Supervisor
Eric Duriez

Assistant Directors
1st: Elsa Amiel
2nd: Franklin Ohannessian

Script Supervisor
Élodie van Beuren

2nd Camera Operators
Performances
Christophe Legal
Berto

Gaffer
Jean-Pierre Lacroix

Key Grip
Julien Covens

Properties
Christophe Offret

Costumes
Alexia Crisp-Jones

Make-up
Delphine Jaffart

Hairdresser
Julien Humeau

Opening Titles
Deubal

Titles Graphic Artist
Julien Baret

End Titles
TEST

Music Supervisor
Elise Duguern

Soundtrack
"Have Love Will Travel" – The Sonics; "Black and Tan Fantasy"; "I Put a Spell on You" – Screamin' Jay Hawkins; "God Save the USA" – Amandine Bourgeois; "Hub Caps and Tail Lights" from *Breakfast at Tiffany's* by Henry Mancini – Henry Mancini & His Orchestra; "Louie Louie" – (J) The Nomads; (2) The Kingsmen; "Angry Sea (Warmae)" – "Theme for Gipsy" – Sonny Lester and his Orchestra; "Moon River" – Liberate; "The Shimmy" – The Upsetters; "You Don't Care" – Terry Callier; "I Will" – Suzanne Ramsey; "Kitten on the Keys"; guitar by Ulysse Klotz; "On the Good Ship Lollipop"; "My Girl's Puss"; "Dream On"; "Hole in My Head"; "Kitty Muffins"; "Stumphosenrap"; "Ode to Dita" – Suzanne Ramsey; "Kitten on the Keys"; "I Got to Move" – Ron Sunshine; "Sowar el habibab" – Hossam Ramzy; "Overture" from "The Magic Flute" by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – Falioti Orchestra Budapest; "K620, No.2 Papageno" from "The Magic Flute" by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart; "Wang n' qing" aka "Yesterday's Love"; "And so the Story Goes (Di Da Di)" – Coco Lee; "Girl on the Sand" by Stanley Myers; "Looking back on Love"; "Tian

liang,liao" – S.H.E.; "The Lounge Pianist"; "The Need in Me"; "J'ai réappris à vivre" – Freddy Boys

Sound
Olivier Mauvezin

Re-recording Mixer
Stéphane Thibaut

Sound Editor
Séverin Favriau

New Burlesque Consultant
Kitty Hartl

CAST

Miranda Colclasure
herself, "Mimi Le Meaux"

Suzanne Ramsey
herself, "Kitten on the Keys"

Linda Marracini
herself, "Dirty Martini"

Julie Ann Muz
herself, "Julie Atlas Muz"

Angela De Lorenzo
herself, "Eve Lovell"

Alexander Craven
himself, "Roky Roulette"

Mathieu Amalric
Joachim Zand

Damien Odoul
François

Ulysse Klotz
Ulysse

Simon Roth
Baptiste

Joseph Roth
Balhazar

Aurélia Petit
girl at service station

Antoine Gouy
software installation man

Pierre Grimblat
Chapuis

Jean-Toussaint Bernard
hotel(s) receptionist

Anne Benoit
supermarket cashier

Florence Ben Sadoun
woman in hospital

Erwan Ribard
commissar

Julie Ferrier
Julie Ferrier

Franzo Curcio
theatre manager

Frédéric Richard
Café-Relais guttartist

André S. Labarthe
cabaret owner

Jean-François Marquet
journalist

Laurent Roth
airline captain

Alexia Crisp-Jones
air hostess

Hélène Houël
Hotel Mercure waitress

Feriel
oriental dancer

Erick Lenoir
Café Flipper owner

Xavier Pottier
delivery guy

Dolby Digital
In Colour
[L85:1]
Subtitles

Distributor
Artificial Eye Film Company

French/German
theatrical title
Tournée

Outcast

Ireland/United Kingdom 2009

Director: Colm McCarthy

With James Nesbitt, Kate Dickie, Niall Bruton, Hanna Stanbridge

While the haunted house has long been a staple of horror, more recently a socially conscious variant has emerged in British genre cinema – the haunted housing estate. In films such as Genevieve Jolliffe's *Urban Ghost Story* (1998), Johnny Kevorkian's *The Disappeared* (2008) and Philip Ridley's *Heartless* (2009), supernatural entities visit their own mythological framework on all the disaffection, deprivation, desperation and decay of gritty modern urban landscapes. Similarly, *Outcast* opens with images of primordial runes and mystic sigils graffitied on the walls of Edinburgh's Greendykes estate – where director/co-writer Colm McCarthy spent his childhood years before cutting his teeth on numerous television series and a short film (*The Making of a Prodigy*, 2003).

"There's a beast after me, because of my father. I think it might even be my father." The strange, withdrawn 16-year-old Fergal (Niall Bruton) may articulate the concept in oddly vivid language, but his words strike home in Greendykes, where many of his neighbours are, much like him, fatherless refugees from their own pasts – including Petronella (Hanna Stanbridge), the Romanian girl-next-door who lives with her alcoholic single mother and Down's syndrome brother. Like Tomas Alfredson's *Let the Right One In* (2008), *Outcast* anchors all its paranormal activities in a fragile romance between young lovers who, though from different worlds, bond over their shared dream of fitting in or moving on – and McCarthy's film, like Alfredson's, blends a delicate restraint with a strong sense of place.

The location, not to mention the presence of Kate Dickie in the role of Fergal's tough-loving mother Mary, may evoke the contemporary cinema of Andrea Arnold, but in it are staged timeless rites of passage and oedipal conflicts, as a son coming of age must assume the bestial legacy of the father (James Nesbitt) who left him at birth. It's a seemingly incongruous clash of the old and the new, and yet by reimagining the alienated, underground existence of the *sidhe* – the ancient fairy folk of Celtic myth – in a contemporary setting where everyone seems marginalised and invisible, McCarthy has hit upon a perfect match. At its heart, this is a very human drama of dysfunction, betrayal and abandonment, in which the sins of each generation are passed on to the next – but for all the naturalism of its presentation, the Greendykes estate is also made to accommodate spells, curses, necromancy and shape-shifting, in a very modern retelling of the werewolf mythos. This is social realism wrapped in a new skin, and in McCarthy it introduces a new, fully formed talent to British genre cinema. ➤ Anton Bitel

SYNOPSIS Greendykes housing estate, Edinburgh, present day. Withdrawn teenager Fergal moves into a flat with his single mother Mary. They are both *sidhe* – Celtic fairy people – and have been on the run for years from Fergal's cursed destiny. Mary uses spells to ensure that their location remains hidden from anyone wishing them ill, and warns Fergal against getting too close to teenage neighbour Petronella. Mary is right to be concerned, for mother and son are being relentlessly hunted down by Fergal's uncle Liam and father Cathal, the latter a power-hungry man granted temporary magical gifts by Mary's family to kill his forbidden progeny. As Fergal's relationship with Petronella blossoms, and the increasingly out-of-control Cathal determines to kill Mary along with Fergal, a beast haunts the estate at night, murdering several people but sparing Petronella and her Down's syndrome brother Tomatsk.

After Cathal's efforts to track down Mary and Fergal are thwarted by Mary's magic, he abandons Liam and, using a type of necromancy expressly prohibited by the local *sidhe* Laird, manages to obtain Mary and Fergal's address. He confronts and kills Mary, only to be killed himself by Fergal, who has emerged from his bedroom in the form of the beast. Fergal meets Petronella in the estate's playground, but as the couple have sex together for the first time, Fergal transforms once again. Liam appears and tells Petronella that he must stop the beast, as it can only be killed by its own kin. Petronella shouts a warning to the beast, and it kills Liam. When it turns on Petronella, she stabs it.

The Laird approaches Petronella begging in the street, and reveals that she was able to kill the beast only because she is pregnant with Fergal's child.

CREDITS

Directed by
Colm McCarthy

Produced by
John McDonnell
Brendan McCarthy
Eddie Dick

Written by
Colm McCarthy
Tom K. McCarthy

Director of Photography
Darran Tiernan

Editor
Helen Chapman

Production Designer
Tom Sayer

Composer
Giles Packham

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Makar Production

Production Companies
Fantastic Films presents in co-production with Makar Productions with the participation of Bord Scannán na hÉireann/

Irish Film Board, Scottish Screen, Headgear/Metrol Technology

Produced with the support of investment incentives for the Irish Film Industry provided by the Government of Ireland

Developed with the assistance of the Scottish Screen

National Lottery Fund
Supported by the National Lottery through Scottish Screen

Developed with the support of Bord Scannán na hÉireann

Produced in association with Headgear and Metrol Technology

Executive Producers
Carole Sheridan
Phil Hunt

Visual Effects Lead Artist
Rudolf Germann

Visual Effects by
Windmill Lane
Arni Muenchen

Special Effects
Elements Special Effects

Art Director
Fiona Gavin

Graffiti Artist
Kieran Gorman

Prop Buyer
Janice MacRae

Prop Master
Tony Sheridan

Construction Co-ordinator
Christian Fenwick-Clennell

Construction Managers
Todd Zonderman
Bob Barclay

Costume Designer
Rhona Russell

Costume Supervisor
Elaine Robertson

2nd: Mark Inglis
Script Supervisor
Dorothy Connolly

Casting Director
Des Hamilton

Camera Operator
A. Dave Grennan

Gaffers
Scotland:
Andrew Stewart

Visual Effects Lead Artist
Rudolf Germann

Visual Effects by
Windmill Lane
Arni Muenchen

Special Effects
Elements Special Effects

Art Director
Fiona Gavin

Graffiti Artist
Kieran Gorman

Prop Buyer
Janice MacRae

Prop Master
Tony Sheridan

Construction Co-ordinator
Christian Fenwick-Clennell

Construction Managers
Todd Zonderman
Bob Barclay

Costume Designer
Rhona Russell

Costume Supervisor
Elaine Robertson

Make-up Designer
Niamh Morrison

Make-up Artist
Maxine Dallas

Special Make-up Effects Designer
Paul Hyett

Title Artists
Unlited Berlin
Saskia Rüter

Sound Recordist
Bran Milliken

Stunt Co-ordinator
Abbi Collins

CAST

James Nesbitt

Cathal

Kate Dickie

Mary

Niall Bruton

Fergal

Hanna Stanbridge

Petronella

Ciarán McMenamin

Liam

James Cosmo

laird

Josh Whitelaw

Tomatsk

Therese Bradley

Jitta

Sean McCarthy

Old Hands

Fiona O'Shaughnessy

Niamh

Christine Tremarco

housing officer

Karen Gillan

Ally

Andrew Martin

James

Daniel Porter

Paul

Wendy Wasson

barmaid

Ian Whyte

the beast

Jody Monteith

youth

Alex McSharry

coroner

Bran the dog

Wilson

Dolby Digital

In Colour

[L85:1]

Distributor

Vertigo Films



Oedipus wrecks: James Nesbitt

Paranormal Activity 2

USA 2010

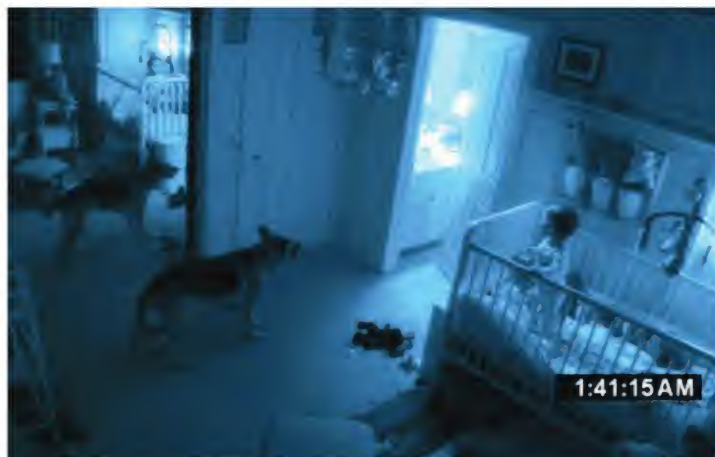
Director: Tod Williams

With Katie Featherston, Micah Sloat, Brian Boland, Molly Ephraim
Certificate 15 90m 59s

Oren Peli's 2009 film *Paranormal Activity* – a logical successor to *The Blair Witch Project* and a notable box-office success after its subtler original ending was replaced by a jump-at-the-camera payoff – had the sort of investment-to-profit ratio that made a sequel mandatory, whether its small-scale high concept was suited to a follow-up or not. Eschewing the errors of *Book of Shadows: Blair Witch 2*, *Paranormal Activity 2* looks very much like its predecessor, albeit with more set-ups. Presented as a compilation of recordings with time codes and date captions (and some tactful fast-forwards), it benefits from a number of fixed security cameras around a haunted property (with significant blind-spots left to be explored by a handheld) to augment the video-diary-look footage.

Director Tod Williams (taking a good-for-the-CV commercial assignment between his John Irving adaptation *The Door in the Floor* and an upcoming Americanisation of the Icelandic thriller *Myrinn/Jar City*) and screenwriter Michael R. Perry (who has written for genre TV shows such as *Eerie Indiana*, *American Gothic*, *Millennium*, *FreakyLinks* and *The Dead Zone*) are solid professionals, but must have gone against their instincts to mimic the CCTV look, accumulation-of-tiny-incidents plotting and improv-sounding dialogue Peli devised in the first place to suit his low budget. At once a prequel and a sequel, dovetailing cleverly with the events of *Paranormal Activity*, this relies a little too much on creaky expositional devices such as the conveniently superstitious ethnic nanny (far less credible than the equivalent Hispanic exorcist who appeared in *The Possession of Joel Delaney* back in 1972) and some species of demon-premise-explaining internet wiki which turns out to be dead on the money. This slightly misses the point, in that what's scary is the randomness of a haunting. Knowing why this particular family has been targeted, with a heavily signposted get-out clause, doesn't really increase the horror, and just opens up a can of plot-worms (it's all the fault of the great-grandmother of the sisters who are the protagonists of each film). Indeed, upping the stakes – by having an imperilled child, a leggy teenage girl, a devoted dog and two marked-for-death adults in the house – actually diffuses the shock.

The biggest jump here harks back to *Poltergeist* (1982), as the heroine is disturbed by a sudden mass-telekinetic attack in her kitchen in broad daylight – a scare, followed by a credible reaction (she swears and runs away) and a suspense-relieving giggle as her abandoned kettle starts to whistle. The new cast – Sprague Grayden,



Barking up the right tree: 'Paranormal Activity 2'

Brian Boland and Molly Ephraim are all slightly better known faces than Katie Featherston and Micah Sloat, who starred in the original – don't work up the credible friction the two-hander in the first film managed (Featherston and Sloat return, and give good accounts of themselves by ignoring all the foreshadowing that might mess with the character development they did last time round). This leaves some plot feints (such as teenage Ali's notion that maybe spirits aren't malevolent, leading to the goes-nowhere what-if-it's-Mom suggestion) and character turns (the truly despicable act Ali's dad performs to save – temporarily – his neck) seeming fairly ho-hum. Here, the film ventures into areas of drama ill-suited to the spycam aesthetic and naturalistic natter of what the producers must be hoping will be a *Paranormal Activity* franchise.

♦♦ Kim Newman

CREDITS

Directed by
Tod Williams
Produced by
Jason Blum
Oren Peli
Screenplay
Michael R. Perry
Christopher Landon
Tom Pabst
Story
Michael R. Perry
Based on the film
Paranormal Activity by
Oren Peli

Director of Photography
Michael Simmonds
Edited by
Gregory Plotkin
Production Designer
Jennifer Spence

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Production Companies
Paramount Pictures
presents a Blumhouse,
Solana Films, Room 101,
Inc. production

Executive Producers
Steven Schneider
Akiva Goldsman
Co-producer
Amir Zbeda
Line Producer
Jeanette Volturro-Brill
Unit Production Manager
Rick A. Osako
Production Co-ordinator
Laura Altmann
Accountant
Carlo Pratto
Location Manager
David Thomsberry
Assistant Directors
1st: James Moran
2nd: Marc Newland
Script Supervisors
Babette Stith
Diane Lea Weiss
Casting
Michael Hothorn
Chief Lighting Technician
Damon Liebowitz
1st Company Grip
Paul M. Farley
Visual Effects by
Hammerhead Productions
Property Master
Zachery Alexander
Costume Designer
Kristin M. Burke
Prosthetic Make-up Effects Created by
Almost Human Inc.
Puppeteer
Zachery Alexander
Sound Designers
Mark Binder
Peter A. Brown
Sound Supervisor
Mark Binder

Sound Mixer
Zsolt Magyar
Re-recording Mixers
Mark Binder
Nick Shaffer
Stunt Co-ordinator
Rob King
Animal Wrangler
Steve Berens

CAST

Katie Featherston
Katie
Micah Sloat
Micah
Brian Boland
Daniel Rey
Molly Ephraim
Ali Rey
Sprague Grayden
Kristi Rey
David Bierend
surveillance camera expert
Seth Ginsberg
Brad
William Juan Prieto
Jackson Xenia Prieto
Hunter Rey
Vivis
Martine

Dolby Digital/DTS/ SDDS
Colour by
DeLuxe
[1.85:1]

Distributor
Paramount Pictures UK

8,188 ft +12 frames

SYNOPSIS US, 2006. The Rey family – Kristi and Daniel, their infant son Hunter and Ali, Daniel's daughter from an earlier marriage – find their house has seemingly been broken into and vandalised, though little has been stolen. Daniel has security cameras installed around the property, to augment the recordings the family make with a camcorder. Minor mysterious events occur – a pool-cleaning machine keeps climbing out of the pool, doors open and close by themselves, securely hung pots fall. Martine, Hunter's nanny, worries that the house is haunted and takes to performing rituals to banish evil spirits, which prompts Daniel to fire her. Kristi's sister Katie admits that when they were children the girls were bothered by a haunting that subsided after their house burned down. Ali discovers on the internet that a traditional pact with a demon can involve bartering away the firstborn son of a family in exchange for wealth, and she works out that Hunter is the first male child in Kristi's family since her great-grandmother became rich in the 1930s. Poltergeist activity continues and Kristi is targeted – though the invisible presence seems to be after Hunter.

One night, Daniel and Ali are tricked out of the house by an assault on their dog, and Kristi seems to be possessed. Daniel calls in Martine, and learns that a ritual could turn the demon away from their home if it is directed instead at another family member.

A month later, after Katie has been possessed and has killed her boyfriend Micah, she turns up at the Rey house, kills Daniel and Kristi, and vanishes with Hunter.

Rare Exports A Christmas Tale

Finland/Norway/
France/Sweden 2010

Director: Jalmari Helander

With Onni Tommila, Jorma Tommila, Tommi Korpela, Rauno Juvonen

Certificate 15 82m 38s

As long as Christmas makes the box office jingle, filmmakers will contrive novel twists on that festive theme, 'the trouble with Santa'. The red-clad philanthropist rarely gets an easy ride, facing kidnap (*The Nightmare before Christmas*), arrest (*Miracle on 34th Street*) or family issues (sibling rivalry in *Fred Claus*, or, in *The Santa Clause*, he's literally your dad.)

The diverting concept behind Finnish fantasy *Rare Exports* is that Santa is a horned beast, long buried under a mountain and now unearthed by an American industrialist who, per *Jurassic Park*, doesn't realise what his curiosity will unleash. In billing Santa as a bogeyman who boils naughty children in his cauldron, Jalmari Helander's feature debut ingeniously exploits the fact that Santa, though in theory benign, in reality strikes terror into many children's hearts.

Since Santa looms so large in the plot (and publicity, onscreen title and credits graphics), you could be forgiven for expecting him to appear in the film. Yet despite a deft build-up, this dreaded monster never appears (though his horns do). Denying us the anticipated child-snatching mayhem badly wrong-foots the audience, resulting in a slightly dour romp. Who it's aimed at is anybody's guess (ageing Terry Pratchett fans?). With its bleeding bodies, swearing, and malevolent, marauding, naked old men chasing a little boy across the snow, it's surely not for nippers.

Uneven in tone, the film brings to mind variously the subversive charm of *Delicatessen*, the stately pacing of *Signs* (which Helander cites as an inspiration), the industrial-unit hostage situation of *Reservoir Dogs* (complete with ear-severing) and the bleak kidnap farce of *Fargo*. It perhaps most resembles Alex de la Iglesia's 1995 film *El día de la bestia*, which also blended irreverent apocalyptic menace with a feel for local colour.

The unfamiliar setting in remote northern Finland is beautiful and unsettling. With its big hills, isolated farms and precarious hold of law, it evokes the feel of a western (with snow-bikes replacing horses). Helander boasts an impressive visual style, with a Spielbergian sensibility in his fluid framing and cutting, and in his eliciting of a good lead performance from a child. He boldly eschews all cosiness: the hardy characters (all male) are outdoorsy types with no time for festive warmth or home comforts; every room is a tip and everyone needs a haircut. Clearly aiming for the status of

SYNOPSIS Remote northern Finland, the present. American mogul Riley unearths a frozen block containing Santa Claus, a horned, child-snatching beast, and his elves, who are naked old men. When reindeer are found slaughtered, local farmers blame Russian wolves, and widowed father Rauno digs an illegal spiked pit in his grounds to catch them. The pit entraps a bearded old man whom Rauno takes for dead. Fearful of arrest, he prepares to saw the body up, but the man is alive and Rauno believes he has caught Santa. He arranges to hand the captive over to Riley for a ransom. Riley explains that this is merely an elf dedicated to protecting Santa.

The elves have kidnapped local children and stolen everyone's radiators; they are defrosting Santa's ice block and keeping the children in potato sacks for Santa to eat. Rauno blows Santa's ice block up while son Pietari lures the elves into a reindeer pen.

Rauno and his friends train the now jobless elves to be nice to children and set up a firm shipping Santas around the world.

'quirky festive gem', this dark comic fable plays as if Tarantino and Roald Dahl had collaborated on a macabre Santa origin story and got sidetracked. It's something of a shaggy-dog story, and it's telling that the title and poster refer to the final-minute punchline. (Unsurprisingly, the film springs from two shorts by Helander, 2003's *Rare Exports* Inc and its 2005 sequel, about the farming of Santas, which attained YouTube glory.)

Finnish culture may not sweep the globe in huge quantities. One thinks of Aki Kaurismäki and Sibelius (and perhaps of Renny Harlin and Eurovision winners Lordi). Though less than the sum of its parts, Helander's atmospheric delve into Finnish folklore could easily have enough international appeal to become itself one of those rare exports.

► Patrick Fahy

CREDITS

Directed by
Jalmari Helander
Producers
Petri Jokiranta
Knut Skoglund
Agnès B.
F.X. Frantz
Anna Björk
Written by
Jalmari Helander
Based on the original
idea by the Helander
Brothers
[i.e. Jalmari Helander,
Juuso Helander]
**Director of
Photography**
Mika Oksama
Editing
Kimmo Taavola
Production Design
Jalmari Helander
Original Music
Joni Seppä
Miska Seppä

©Cinet, Pomor Film,
Love Streams agnès B.
Productions, Davaj Film
**Production
Companies**
Cinet, Pomor Film, Love
Streams agnès B.
Productions, Davaj Film,
Filmcamp, FilmPool
Nord in association with
Kinology
A Petri Jokiranta
production
A Jalmari Helander film
In co-production with
Filmcamp AS (Svein
Andersen and Kjetil
Jensberg), FilmPool
Nord AB (Per-Erik
Svensson)
In association with YLE
Co-productions (Erkki
Astala)
Production Support:
The Finnish Film
Foundation (Kaisu Isto),
Norwegian Film

Institute, Nordic Film &
TV Fund
With the support of The
MEDIA Programme of
the European Union
Line Producer
Anna Björk
Production Manager
Daniel Kuitunen
**Production
Co-ordinators**
Erica Restolten
Bérengère Barner
Accountants
Finland:
Heikki Keskinen
Norway:
Marianne Tollefsen
Sweden:
Mårten Sandberg
**Post-production
Producer**
Tomi Nieminen
Post Supervisor
Antti Peltoranta
Assistant Directors
1st: Villy Indal
2nd: Nina Erdahl
Continuity
Sylvia Granheim
Casting
Nina Erdahl
Laura Munsterhjelm
Estonia:
Margus Öunapuu
Dramaturgs
Petri Jokiranta
Sami Parkkinen
Gaffers
Jani Pinomaa
2nd Unit:
Kosti

Lehikoinen
Key Grip
Torulf Öhrman
Visual Effects
Fake Graphics Ltd
2nd Unit:
Lapland Studio Ltd
**Special Effects/
Pyrotechnics**
Dan Erik Heggelund
SFX Companiet
Additional Editing
Sébastien Prangère
Frédéric Thoraval
Set Designers
Torunn Anfinsen
Liv Ask
Concept Art
Pekka Veikkolainen
Illustrators
Lauri Ahonen
Jenni Juntunen
Prop Masters
Lena P. Cederlund
Per Gunnar Søreng
**Construction/Set
Manager**
Runar Waag
Costume Design
Sajja Sielkinen
Make-up Artist
Salla Mäntymaa
Sound Design
Tuomas Seppänen
Timo Anttila
Jussi Honka
Sound Recordist
Rune Hansen
**Sound Re-recording
Mixer**
Pekka Karjalainen

CAST

Onni Tommila
Pietari
Jorma Tommila
Rauno, Pietari's father
Tommii Korpela
Aimo
Rauno Juvonen
Piipainen
Per Christian Ellefsen
Riley
Ilmari Järvenpää
Juuso, Pietari's
friend
**Peeter
Jakobi**
Pietari's
elf

Jonathan Hutchings
Greene
Risto Salmi
sheriff
Jens Sivertsen
Sigmund Bøe
Olav Pedersen
Nils M. Iselvmo
main elves
Steinar Skogstad
Nils Nymo
Hjalmar Iselvmo
Steinar Tunes
Torgeir Fosberg
Tor Kvammen
Hans Prestbakmo
Alf Roald Pedersen
Nikolaj Alsterdal
elves
Knut Osa Greger
cargo Santa
Kjell Tore Nordli
helicopter pilot
Stein-Erik Olsen
herdsman
Atle Kirkegård
Hans Lindgård
Einar Fagerun
Bjørn Pedersen
Tommy Svendsen
miners

**Dolby Digital
In Colour
[2.35:1]
Subtitles**

Distributor
Icon Film Distribution
7,437 ft +0 frames

Finnish/Norwegian/
French/Swedish
theatrical title
Rare Exports
Onscreen English title
**Rare Exports: From the
Land of the Original
Santa Claus**

Onni Tommila



Saw 3D

USA 2010

Director: Kevin Greutert

With Tobin Bell, Costas Mandylor,
Betsy Russell, Sean Patrick Flanery
Certificate 18 89m 46s

The *Saw* franchise endures mostly thanks to its set pieces: the industrial death-traps, which are designed to teach a valuable lesson – here, for instance, two guys who have unknowingly been seeing the same woman are strapped to buzz-saws which they can choose to shove into each other or save their lives by allowing the two-timing minx to be cut in half. All the way back to James Wan's ingenious *Saw* (2004) there has also been a structural daring, with multiple storylines and timelines dovetailing across all the films, and the pale, calm, impressive presence of Tobin Bell as a villain who isn't even technically a serial killer (the point is that all his victims *could* escape if they took drastic and painful measures).

In this seventh instalment, which drops the title numeral to play up the 3D add-on, the traps are still highlights, though a certain repetition has set in which mutes the effect. There is even a thread of revisiting greatest hits worked into the plot, as the bear-trap device used in the first film (and, indeed, in the promo short *Saw* creators Wan and Leigh Whannell made to raise funds) is finally sprung, with a stereoscopic explosion of blood and teeth. And the inevitable last-reel revelation, which features one of the series' now traditional hallucinatory flashback montages that only make sense if watched at the end of a seven-film marathon, sets up a return to the basement bathroom where it all started, and a cameo from Cary Elwes, star of *Saw*, whose character is now placed to be on board in possible future instalments, with a couple of other sorely injured folks still lingering as possible co-stars.

If the *Saw 3D* traps are less ingenious – often, the scrupulous fairness is absent – it's explained by the fact that prime mover Hoffman is simply a Jigsaw imitator, since the original has been dead since 2006's *Saw III*. A downside is that top-billed Bell has a much reduced role, primarily in one flashback encounter with newcomer Sean Patrick



Run for your wife: Gina Holden

Flanery, cast as the author of a bogus Jigsaw survivor memoir and somehow less resonant a prime victim than the callous medical insurance functionary tormented last time round. Further instalments are probably unavoidable.

► Kim Newman

CREDITS

Directed by
Kevin Greutert
Produced by
Gregg Hoffman
Oren Koules
Mark Burg
Written by
Patrick Melton
Marcus Dunstan
**Director of
Photography**
Brian Gedge
Editor
Andrew Coutts
Production Designer
Tony Ianni
**Music by/Original
Score Performed by**
Charlie Clouser

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Production Companies
Twisted Pictures
presents a

Burg/Koules/Hoffman
production
Produced in association
with A Bigger Boat and
Serendipity Productions
Produced with the
assistance of Ontario
Production Services Tax
Credit, Film or Video
Production Services Tax
Credit
Executive Producers
Daniel Jason Heffner
Peter Block
Jason Constantine
James Wan
Leigh Whannell
Co-producer
Troy Bognard
Associate Producer
Kaleigh Kavanagh
Production Manager
Kym Crepin
**Production
Co-ordinator**

SYNOPSIS US, the present. Renegade cop Hoffman, who has been carrying on the work of serial killer John Kramer (aka Jigsaw), survives a trap set by Jill Tuck, Kramer's widow. She goes to Gibson, an internal affairs officer, and offers to trade testimony against Hoffman for immunity from prosecution. Bobby Dagan, a celebrity on the strength of his fraudulent claim that he is a survivor of a Jigsaw death-trap, is abducted – along with his wife Joyce, publicist Nina, lawyer Suzanne and best friend/manager Cale – and put through punishing tests which prove fatal to his entourage. Gibson investigates the site of a recent Jigsaw massacre and finds clues leading him to the building where Dagan is being tested – only to fall into a trap set for him.

Hoffman infiltrates the morgue and a police station, killing law-enforcement officials and abducting Jill. Dagan is forced to go through the ordeal he described in his mendacious memoir, and fails – condemning his wife Joyce to roast in an oven. Hoffman uses a classic Jigsaw 'reverse bear-trap' device to kill Jill, but is then captured by Dr Gordon, a one-time Jigsaw victim who has been secretly collaborating all along and has been charged by Kramer to look out for Jill. Gordon chains Hoffman up in the underground bathroom where he once sawed off his own foot to escape, but does not let him have a saw.

Cristin L. Becker
Production Accountant
 Barbara Pecs
Location Manager
 Tom Vencelides
Post-production Supervisor
 Matt Cahill
2nd Unit Director
 Steve Webb
Assistant Directors
 1st: Steve Webb
 2nd: Sarah Buell
2nd Unit
 1st: David McAree
 1st: David McLeod
 2nd: Sean Watson
Script Supervisors
 Patricia Joyce
 2nd Unit:
 Elizabeth Tremblay
 Margaret Tanod
Casting
 Stephanie Gorin
Stereographers
 William Reeve
 2nd Unit:
 Gary Isaacs
Camera Operator/ Steadicam
 Mark Hroch
B Camera Operator
 Michael Fylyshian
Gaffers
 Bob McRae
 Norm O'Halloran
 2nd Unit:
 Herb Reischl Jr
Key Grips
 Monty Montgomerie
 2nd Unit:
 Steve Van Denzen
Visual Effects Supervisor
 Jon Campfens
Visual Effects by
 Switch VFX
 Additional:
 Rocket Science VFX
 String Theory VFX
3D Capture/Analysis
 Gary Isaacs
Special Effects Supervisor
 Rob Sanderson
Key Special Effects
 Shuba Dasgupta
Art Director
 Peter Grundy
Set Decorator
 Liesl DesLauriers
Property Master
 Jim Murray
Construction Co-ordinator
 Robert M. Valeriot
Costume Designer
 Alex Kavanagh
Key Make-up Artist
 Colin Penman
Key Hair Stylist
 Stephanie Ingram
Titles/Opticals
 Pietro Gallo
 Eric Myles
Soundtrack
 "Life Won't Wait" — Ozzy Osbourne
Production Sound Mixers
 Greg Chapman
 Doug Johnston
Supervising Sound Editors
 Mark Gingras
 John D. Smith
Stunt Co-ordinator
 Shelley Cook

CAST

Tobin Bell
 'Jigsaw', John Kramer
 Costas Mandylor
 Detective Mark Hoffman
 Betsy Russell
 Jill Tuck
 Sean Patrick Flanery
 Bobby Dagan
 Cary Elwes
 Doctor Lawrence Gordon
 Dean Armstrong
 Cale
 Chad Donella
 Gibson
 Gina Holden
 Joyce Dagan
 Chester Bennington
 Evan
 Rebecca Marshall
 Suzanne
 Naomi Snieckus
 Nina

Laurence Anthony
 Rogers
 James Van Patten
 Doctor Heffner
 Sebastian Pigott
 Brad
 Jon Cor
 Ryan
 Anne Greene
 Dina
 Dru Viergever
 Dan
 Gabby West
 Kara
 Benjamin Clost
 Jake
 Kevin McGarry
 Charlie
 Kim Schraner
 Palmer
 Olunike Adeliyi
 Sidney
 Ish Morris
 Alex
 Carlos Diaz
 coroner worker
 Elizabeth Rowin
 Sara
 Christine Simpson
 Donna Evans
 Jacintha Wesselingh
 newscaster 1
 Claudia DiFolco
 newscaster 2
 Kimberley D'Eon
 newscaster 3
 Rachel Wilson
 mother
 Alli Chung
 business woman
 Desmond Campbell
 business man
 Billy Oliver
 police officer 1
 Liise Keeling
 police officer 2
 Taneira Howard
 Simone
 Shauna MacDonald
 Tara
 Joanna Douglas
 Joan
 Janelle Hutchison
 Addy
 Greg Bryk
 Mallick
 Larissa Gomes
 Emily
 Kevin Rushton
 Trevor
 Jagger Gordon
 survivor group member 1
 Kyle Cicerella
 survivor group member 2
 Simone Steene
 survivor group member 3
 Simon Northwood
 lead SWAT officer
 Regan Moore
 Danny Lima
 Brian Thomas
 Wayne Downer
 Billy Oliver
 Patrick Mark
 Chris McGuire
 SWAT officers
 Don Gough
 limo driver
 David Gale
 Shelley Hoffman
 Michael Miranda
 Chris Owens
 Catherine Rix
 Kent Staines
 additional voice talent

Dolby Digital/SDDS
 Colour by
 DeLuxe
 [1.85:1]
 3D

Distributor
 Lionsgate UK

8,079 ft +0 frames

Secretariat

USA 2010

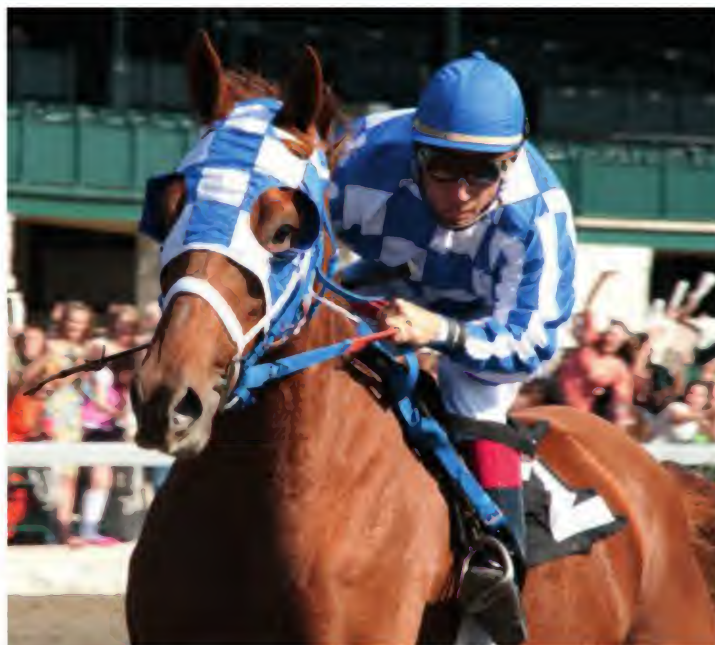
Director: Randall Wallace
 With Diane Lane, John Malkovich,
 Dylan Walsh, Dylan Baker
 Certificate U 122m 52s

It sometimes seems as though virtually any and every sports champion will eventually be converted into an inspirational Hollywood movie — champion speed-eater Joey 'Jaws' Chestnut, Mr Forty-Five-Pizza-Slices-in-Ten-Minutes, it can happen to you too. With *Secretariat*, however, the corks are pulled out of the dyke holding back a surging sea of tear-soaked stable dung. You'd better head to high ground.

In many ways the film was inevitable, after the success of *Seabiscuit* (2003), and given the reality of *Secretariat* the horse, which was a massive, acutely bred rocket of an animal with a heart more than two times the size of a normal thoroughbred. The dictates of chest-swelling sports movies demand that the climactic championship season, which for *Secretariat* was as natural as waking up in the morning, has to be Against All Odds, and so screenwriter Mike Rich and director Randall Wallace concoct one tepid, unconvincing mini-obstacle after another, finally attempting to caricature a horse-to-horse rivalry with a competing animal, going so far as to have the beasts exchange wary looks in close-up, and having *Secretariat* pee on the shoes of a sceptical reporter.

Shortcuts are wall-to-wall: Wallace shoots his horse races like the battle scenes in *Braveheart* (which he wrote) — too close, jittered up in post-production, and for much of the time it's so difficult to tell where one horse is in relation to the others that characters have to tell us out loud. It's the kind of soap-opera-inflected drama where conversations transpire only to kill the moments before someone walks in the door with either good news or bad. Every fool idea you could think of is piled in, from Nelsan Ellis's spiritual, yes-massuh horse whisperer to poor John Malkovich's clownishly outfitted trainer, who despite being positioned as the crotchety comic relief is never

SYNOPSIS US, 1969. Colorado housewife Penny Chenery is called back home to her parents' Virginia horse farm when her mother dies. There, she tries to assess the farm's business and discovers that a deal with a millionaire will leave her a new foal with a strong legacy. Ignoring her family for huge stretches, she struggles to pay the farm's taxes by selling sire shares in the new colt and hiring a trainer and jockey for it. Her lawyer husband back home isn't happy and her kids miss her, but Chenery presses on and begins racing the horse, called *Secretariat*, which starts to win. A mouth abscess sets the animal back, but not for long: *Secretariat* breaks records and eventually wins the Triple Crown.



Running on empty: Otto Thorwarth

given anything remotely amusing to say. Diane Lane, as the heart-of-gold housewife who saves the orphanage (read: family horse farm) with her huge gamble on what seems to have been a surefire racing bonanza, retains her radiant modesty throughout, itself no small achievement.

There's so much hugging and cheering you'd have thought world peace had finally been achieved, but caveat emptor: the manipulations of *Secretariat*, all the more outrageous for having no basis in reality, are of a particular stripe. Rich (writer of *The Rookie*, *Radio* and *The Nativity Story*) and Wallace (writer of *Pearl Harbor* and director of *We Were Soldiers*) are proud members of Hollywood's simple-minded Christian-conservative-militarist wing, and there's a blind righteousness in the movie that's galling, beginning with the narration citing the story of Job as history ("Three thousand years ago, there was a man...") and the horse's Nativity-like manger birth, through to his famous Triple Crown run for redemption and its accompanying blasts of gospel music. Still, it's tough to parse out what spiritual issue is being redeemed here; rather, as with so much American Christian culture, it seems as though we are simply meant to share vicariously and mindlessly in the triumphant glory and not wonder what it's all supposed to mean.

The filmmakers' sanctimonious tendencies don't play well with the story either — Lane's 'little lady' is motivated primarily by having to pay millions of dollars of inheritance tax on her parents' expansive Virginia farm after they die (Scott Glenn sleeps through his role as the father), boiling down *Secretariat*'s record-breaking ascension to a matter of cash, debts paid and profits made. Keep this basic framework in mind while the film indulges in scene after scene of prove-it-to-the-naysayers resolve and the horse-as-Holy-Ghost mysticism, and a callow hypocrisy cannot help but

rise to the surface. Suspect all movies that endeavour to inspire you with Christ imagery, but especially when all that's at stake is money.

Michael Atkinson

CREDITS

Directed by
 Randall Wallace
Produced by
 Gordon Gray
 Mark Ciardi
Written by
 Mike Rich
 Suggested by
Secretariat: The Making of a Champion by William Nack
Director of Photography
 Dean Semler
Film Editor
 John Wright
Production Designer
 Tom Sanders
Music by/Orchestra Conducted by
 Nick Glennie-Smith

©Disney Enterprises, Inc.
Production Companies
 Walt Disney Pictures presents a Mayhem Pictures production
 A Randall Wallace film
Executive Producers
 Bill Johnson
 Mike Rich
Co-producer
 Kim Winther
Associate Producers
 Andrew Wallace
 Jayne Armstrong
Unit Production Managers
 Susan McNamara
 Bill Johnson
 2nd Unit/Visual Effects:
 Bill Johnson
Production Co-ordinators
 Robert Mazaraki
 Kentucky Unit:
 Allison Fungal
 2nd Unit/Visual Effects:
 Tracy Kettler
Production Accountant
 Donald Walker
Location Managers
 Peter J. Novak
 David Wolfson
 2nd Unit:

Colleen Gibbons
 Kentucky Unit:
 Chris Baugh
 2nd Unit/Visual Effects:
 Damon Gordon
2nd Unit Director
 Rusty Hendrickson
Assistant Directors
 1st: Kim Winther
 2nd: Heather Wusterbarth
 2nd Unit
 1st: Lars Winther
 1st: Doug Plasse
 2nd: Dennis Burrell
 2nd Unit/Visual Effects
 1st: John Scotti
 2nd: Amy Schmidt
Script Supervisor
 Pam Fuller
Casting
 Sheila Jaffe
Directors of Photography
 2nd Unit:
 Brad Shield
 2nd Unit/Visual Effects:
 Kriss Krosskove
Camera Operators
 Mark Goellnicht
 Richard Merryman
 Kriss Krosskove
 2nd Unit/Visual Effects
 Maurice McQuire
 Mike Martinez
Spacecam Operator
 2nd Unit/Visual Effects:
 Ron Goodman
Chief Lighting Technicians
 Jim Gilson
 2nd Unit/Visual Effects:
 Joe Martens
Key Grips
 William 'Bear' Paul
 2nd Unit:
 Doug Cowden
 2nd Unit/Visual Effects:
 Kim Heath
Visual Effects Supervisor
 Ray McIntyre
Visual Effects by
 Pixel Magic
Special Effects Supervisor:
 Paul Lombardi
 Co-ordinator:
 John Milnac

Art Directors

Naaman Marshall
Kentucky Unit:
Craig Jackson
Set Designers
Darrell Wight
Alex McCarroll
Set Decorator
Patrick Cassidy
Property Masters
David Gulick
2nd Unit/Visual Effects:
Rob Chalk
Construction
Co-ordinator
Tom Jones Jr
Costume Designer
Michael T. Boyd
Costume Supervisor
Beverly M. Woods
Make-up Department
Head
Michael Mills
Key Make-up Artist
Richard Redfelfsen
Hair Department Head
Kim Santantonio
Key Hairstylist
Melizah Anguiano
Schmidt
Main/End Title
Sequence
Picture Mill
Featured Cello
Steve Erdody
Orchestrations
Benoit Groulx
Soundtrack
"Silent Night" – AJ
Michalka; "I'll Take You
There" – The Staple
Singers; "Oh Happy
Day" – Edwin Hawkins
Singers; "The Longest
Goodbye" – Scott
Nickoley, Jamie Dunlap;
"I Am Free" by Randall
Wallace, Nick Glennie-
Smith – Nick Glennie-
Smith; "My Old
Kentucky Home" – The
University of Kentucky
Wildcat Marching Band;
"It's Not How Fast, It's
Not How Far" by Randall
Wallace, Nick Glennie-
Smith – Andrew
Wallace; "It's Who You
Are" by Randall Wallace
– AJ Michalka
Sound Designer
Benjamin L. Cook
Sound Mixers
David Daniel
2nd Unit/Visual Effects:
Tim Cooney
Sound Mixing
Kevin O'Connell
Beau Borders
Supervising Sound
Editors
Kamri Asgar
Sean McCormack
Stunt Co-ordinators
Freddie Hice
Rusty Hendrickson
Technical Adviser
Leonard Lusky
Consultants
Penny Chenery
William Nack
Animal Handlers
Rusty Hendrickson
Rex Peterson
Mark Warrack
Lisa Brown
Scout Hendrickson

CAST

Diane Lane
Penny Chenery
John Malkovich
Lucien Laurin
Dylan Walsh
Jack Tweedy
Dylan Baker
Hollis Chenery
Margo Martindale
Miss Ham
Nelsan Ellis
Eddie Sweat
Otto Thorwarth
Ronnie Turcotte
Fred Dalton Thompson
Bull Hancock

James Cromwell

Ogden Phillips
Scott Glenn
Chris Chenery
Kevin Connolly
Bill Nack
Eric Lange
Andy Beyer
AJ Michalka
Kate Tweedy
Mike Harding
E.V. Benjamin
Richard Fullerton
Robert Kleburg
Tim Ware
John Galbreath
Nestor Serrano
Pancho Martin
Keith Austin
Lafitte Pincay
Drew Roy
Seth Hancock
Carissa Capobianco
Sarah Tweedy
Sean Cunningham
Chris Tweedy
Jacob Rhodes
John Tweedy
Graham McTavish
Earl Jansen
Tom Foley
Jimmy Gaffney
Grant Whitacre
Paul Feliciano
Forry Smith
obnoxious owner
Tom Clark
CBS anchor
Ken Strunk
Dr. Manuel Gilman
Jazz Undy
fan 1
Michael Guthrie
fan 2
Cullen Wallace
Che wannabe
Mike Battaglia
derby official
Tony Renaud
reporter 1
Jennifer Trier
receptionist
Wynn Reichert
pastor
Tim Layden
reporter 2
Bill Nack
reporter 3
Pamela Pryor
waitress
Kate Ward
Belmont guest
Andrew Wallace
Belmont singer
Rusty Hendrickson
burger joint cook
Michael Boyd
golfer 1
Michael Mills
golfer 2
Albert Duho
berated stable hand
Audrey Scott
6-year-old Penny
Slaid Parker
New York taxi driver
Joe Chrest
sports desk anchor
Jason Schwartz
spectator
Reid Cherner
Hank Goldberg
Dick Jerardi
John McClain
Jay Privman
hack pack

Dolby Digital/DTS/
SDDS
Colour by/US prints
by
DeLuxe

International prints by
Technicolor
[2.35:1]

Distributor
Buena Vista
International (UK)

11,057 ft +11 frames

Skyline

Directors: Colin Strause,
Greg Strause

With Eric Balfour, David Zayas,
Donald Faison, Brittany Daniel
Certificate 15 92m 25s

"You haven't changed one bit," says Elaine (Scottie Thompson) to her boyfriend Jarrod (Eric Balfour) as they look at photographs of him clowning around with his long-time best friend Terry (Donald Faison). Elaine is pregnant, and wants Jarrod to become a responsible father ("That's why you're my hero," she comments as Jarrod helps a mother with her airline baggage), but Jarrod is equally attracted by an invitation to join Terry's visual-effects crew in LA and the playboy lifestyle that comes with it. Thankfully the sort of intervention required to bring Jarrod's dilemma into sharp focus arrives, a few hours later, in the form of an apocalyptic alien invasion – and after fewer than three days of large-scale abductions, perilous close encounters and last-ditch aerial dogfights, the human race will have been mostly reduced to food for thought, while Jarrod may well have changed for good.

Like Terry and his LA cohort, brothers Colin and Greg Strause also run a VFX firm (called Hydraulx), which has contributed to films such as *Avatar*, *Iron Man 2* and *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* – and it is in the

realm of spectacle that *Skyline* is most impressive, boasting more than 900 VFX that bring to life a full-scale assault on LA by an array of imaginatively conceived and realised extraterrestrial creatures. The Brothers Strause have done alien invasions before in their directorial debut *AVP: Alien vs. Predator – Requiem* (2007), but *Skyline* is a somewhat different monster. Entirely independently produced on a relatively small budget (about \$10 million) and shot 'in house' in and around Greg Strause's own Marina del Rey condominium, it shows humankind's hopeless struggles against virtually unstoppable forces, all unfolding before a room with a view. First-time writers Joshua Cordes and Liam O'Donnell may sketch their characters with minimal nuance but they show plenty of genre savvy, mixing up ideas from *Independence Day* (1996), *Signs* (2002), *The War of the Worlds* (2005), *Cloverfield* (2008), *District 9* (2009) and even *The Brain from Planet Arous* (1957), while propelling their horrifically bleak vision to its bitter end. It is difficult to imagine where the sequel (already slated for 2012) can possibly go.

The aliens' modus operandi for invasion becomes a metaphor for the film itself, which dazzles viewers into sitting back and enjoying the amazing light show, possibly at the expense of their own brains. Resistance is futile.

♦♦ **Anton Bitel**

Credits for this film were unavailable at the time of going to press and will be published in the February issue



Apocalypse now: Donald Faison, Eric Balfour

SYNOPSIS Marina del Rey, Los Angeles, the present. In town to celebrate his friend Terry's birthday, New Yorker Jarrod is torn between news that his girlfriend Elaine is pregnant and an offer to join Terry's successful VFX company. Early in the morning after Terry's party, a full-scale alien invasion begins. Aurora-like blue lights fall out of the sky, mesmerising onlookers before drawing them up into spacecraft hovering overhead, while smaller, squid-like flying craft and flightless behemoths use powerful tentacles to mop up those left behind and fight off any resistance.

Watching events unfold from Terry's high-rise condominium, Jarrod, Elaine, Terry, Terry's girlfriend Candice and assistant Denise decide to flee to Terry's yacht, but they are attacked as they try to leave the building. With Denise dead and Terry taken, Jarrod, Elaine and Candice return to Terry's apartment, joined by concierge Oliver. They witness a hopeless dogfight between the US Air Force and the alien ships, which ends in a nuclear strike that merely angers the invading force while flattening much of LA. When Candice is drawn up by the light, Oliver chooses to blow himself and a behemoth up rather than be abducted. Meanwhile on the building's rooftop, Jarrod and Elaine have several violent clashes with aliens before being drawn up into the sky in one another's embrace.

Elaine wakes to see Jarrod's brain being removed from his body. She screams as her pregnant belly is probed; a monster recently fuelled with Jarrod's brain leaps to her defence.

Slackistan

United Kingdom 2010

Director: Hammad Khan

With Shahbaz Shigri, Aisha Linnea Akhtar, Ali Rehman Khan

Though filmmaking in Pakistan is in decline – thanks to the lack of government support and the overwhelming popularity of movies from the mighty Bollywood machine over the border – every once in a while the country produces a gem. One thinks of Nasir Khan's documentary *Made in Pakistan* (2009); Shoaib Mansoor's *Khuda Kay Liye* (2007), which looked at the rift between liberals and fundamentalists; and Omar Khan's delightful Pakistani take on the zombie-horror genre *Zibahkhana* (2007). The latter merits a passing reference in *Slackistan*, Pakistan's first ever slacker movie and a breath of fresh air for the country's film industry.

In sharp contrast to the terrorism, natural disasters and cricket scandals that usually dominate media coverage of the country, *Slackistan* centres on a group of idle rich twentysomethings whiling away their time in Islamabad. In the best tradition of mumblecore movies, nothing much happens, but the film is engaging thanks to the immense likeability of the lead actors, who seem to be playing themselves. British Pakistani director Hammad Khan (who works for the BBFC, and who has also edited, co-produced and co-written the film) casts an almost documentary eye on the capital city, and is more interested in the ebb and flow of his characters' lives and their existentialist angst than in providing any dramatic spikes. Unemployed, overprivileged friends Hasan, Sherry and Saad drift aimlessly; they speak mostly in English with American accents because they went to the American school in Islamabad. Hasan (Shahbaz Shigri), who is also the film's narrator, has some vague notion of being a filmmaker but isn't motivated enough to pick up his camera until the end of the film, and even then does so in desultory fashion.

The reality of everyday life in Pakistan impinges on the protagonists' lives only through the occasional newspaper headline or a muted television in the background. The characters' westernised, cocooned bubble is, however, an increasingly uneasy one, and as the film progresses, Khan creates an atmosphere of growing frustration among his characters. The Islamabad ennui celebrated in the film gradually leads to a sense that something must snap, at least for Hasan, who visits the underprivileged parts of the city and begins to take an interest in his servants' lives as a means to gain inspiration for his filming. Escape to the west – in the form of family based abroad – is an option for the protagonists, but the only one to take this route is Hasan's crush Aisha, who moves to Boston and marries an American Pakistani.

By the end of the film, Khan subtly leaves the viewer with the feeling that the bubble is on the



Privilege: Zainab Omar, Osman Khalid Butt

← verge of bursting and the complications of quotidian life in Pakistan will inevitably come surging in.

♦♦ Naman Ramachandran

CREDITS

Directed by
Hammad Khan
Produced by
Shandana Ayub
Hammad Khan
Written by
Shandana Ayub
Hammad Khan
Directors of Photography
Hammad Khan
Adnan Malik
Edited by
Hammad Khan

©Big Upstairs Films
Executive Producers
Menhaj Huda
Stella Nwimo
Associate Producer
Adnan Malik
Post Producer
Louise Stewart
Assistant Director
Nadia Rahman Khan
Wardrobe/Make-up
Pashmina Ahmed
Soundtrack
"Chaku!"; "Par Desi";
"Ayesha"; "Layla" – The
Korninas; "Can You
Fly?"; "The Dream of All
My Life"; "Sound of
Peace and Love" –
Kabul Dreams; "Untitled
Demo"; "The Day Song";
"Racing Downwards" –
Vellicate; "Intro"; "Pink
Moving Objects";

"Welcome to
Videogame Island";
"Leaving Videogame
Island"; "Intro Toast
Squares"; "The Big
Bubble" – Mole; "Sorry";
"Whatevers"; "Drunken
Denial"; "Cinco de
Mayo"; "Get Your Gun" –
The Falsurnas; "Itchy";
"King of Self"; "No
Reason Now" – Sajid
and Zeeshan; "Original
Idea"; "On the Highway"
by Hammad Khan –
Hammad Khan;
"Islamabad Part II" – Adil
Omar; "Saar Raat
Jaaga" – Noor; "Late
Bloomer" – Zerobridge
Sound Recordist
Andrew Daynes
Dubbing Mixer
Tom Parsons

CAST

Shahbaz Shigri
Hasan
Aisha Linnea Akhtar
Aisha
Ali Rehman Khan
Sheryar; "Sherry"
Shahana Khan Khalil
Zara
Osman Khalid Butt
Saad
Khalid 'Vicky' Saeed
Mani
Rafay Alam
Zeeshan

Uzair Jaswal
slacker 1
Salahuddin Issa
slacker 2
Adnan Malik
Owais
Qasim Ali
"Prince" Qasim
Zainab Omar
Miss Baig
Gohar Hussain
Hasan's father
Hasan Bruun Akhtar
Zara's brother
Shahana Ahmed
Aisha's mother
Robin Nur
Sharif
Abbas Zaidi
Khurram Sheikh
Noman
Babar
Mani's boys
Fida
Ghulam 'Johnny' Mustafa
Hasan's servants
Mohammad Aziz
Hamza
Mir Mohammad Shabbir
ice cream wallah
Mohammad Amjad
cake wallah
Pashmina Ahmed
Sabah Nawaz
telecom chicks
Amna Abbasi
Anam Haider
Fatima Sultan
Maryam Khan
Qurat Ul Ain Jehangir
Sana Khan
Zainab Zaman
high school girls
Adil Omar
rapper at party

Farah Khan
party girl 1
Zahra Raza
party girl 2
Nadia Rahman Khan
party girl 3
Haaris Aziz Qureshi
party guy 1
Salman Ahmed
Shaukat
party guy 2
Hammad Khan
offended man at
hotspot
Fawad Ali
Zeeshan's friend 1
Zafar Iqbal
Zeeshan's friend 2
Khurram Malik
Pindi guy 1
Mahmood Hafiz
Pindi guy 2
Bilal
Zara's driver
Robin Nur
Osman Khalid Butt
"Hijra" transvestites
Nadia Rahman Khan
girl at rendezvous 1
Pashmina Ahmed
girl at rendezvous 2
Ahmed Shahzad
video store clerk
Christian community
of F-6 Colony

In Colour
[L78:1]
Part-subtitled

Distributor
Mara Pictures

Somewhere

USA/United Kingdom/
Italy/Japan 2010

Director: Sofia Coppola

With Stephen Dorff, Elle Fanning,
Chris Pontius, Michelle Monaghan
Certificate 15 97m 35s

A car races endless circuits of a desert track, twin pole-dancers pivot obligingly around their poles, an 11-year-old skates elegant pirouettes on an ice rink – Sofia Coppola's *Somewhere* is a film going round in circles. Its axis is Johnny Marco (Stephen Dorff), a movie star convalescing with a broken wrist at famed West Hollywood hotel Chateau Marmont. His life is a treadmill of press conferences, makeup sessions, disorienting foreign award ceremonies and near-daily assignations with concupiscent strangers.

Early on, Johnny lies in his hotel room watching the pole-dancers writhe through their routine at the foot of his bed, until – jaded all the way down to his libido – he falls asleep. The comic disparity between the dancers' energetic titillations and Johnny's recumbent nonchalance begins to pall as the extended scene plays out. Hot on the heels of an opening which, filmed from a fixed camera, shows Johnny's car speeding round and round the racetrack and thus in and out of the static shot, such sustained moments of minimal action reveal Coppola absorbing the treacle-slow tropes of contemporary arthouse cinema – a shift of gear after the formal opulence of *Marie Antoinette* (2006). But the pole-dancing episode, which will be repeated with scant variation and at similar leisure a few scenes hence, establishes a problem of empathy – how can an audience be expected to sympathise fully with the ennui of a character successful enough to have anything (and anyone) within his grasp? It's a problem *Somewhere* will spend the rest of its duration seeking to overcome.

In this respect, the appearance of Johnny's young daughter Cleo and her display on the ice – another protracted sequence but this time without the underlying dread of

purposelessness – marks a turning point. All the time that Johnny spends sitting aimlessly with a bottle of beer, inert and inured, or drifting through parties without any attempt to engage with other people, or abandoning himself to easy sexual encounters, he is a difficult character to warm to. Here *Somewhere* is like a Bret Easton Ellis novel without the teeth. But with Cleo (winningly incarnated by Elle Fanning, a child actress previously seen in David Fincher's *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*) comes a spark that carries the film: her maturity and freshness cut through the tone of laconic self-pity, reviving flagging interest in the viewer as much as in her father.

The parent-daughter relationship feels so truthfully yet un sentimentally observed that the leap to suppose Cleo is drawn from Coppola's own life, passing from hotel to hotel in the company of a famous father, is inevitable. From 'Life without Zoë', the section she scripted for her dad to direct for the portmanteau film *New York Stories* (1989), via *Lost in Translation* (2003) and *Marie Antoinette* (with Versailles as the ultimate in five-star luxury), Coppola has returned repeatedly to hotel settings for their sense of rootlessness, glamour and anonymity. Yet any complaints that Coppola is here simply rejigging *Lost in Translation* in a western setting (a central section in which Johnny takes Cleo to Milan, where various cross-cultural miscommunications ensue, is notable for especial water-treading) are offset by the notion that this may be the director's most personal film to date, the one closest to her own charmed experience.

Somewhere ends in the middle of nowhere, with a suggestion of Johnny's escape from the gilded cage – a would-be cathartic climax that fails to pack any punch, for rarely has there been a character for whom flight has seemed so available. But viewers who write off Coppola's film as the whingeing of the privileged miss a delicately affecting portrait of a maturing, still pre-teen daughter fitting in and around the gaps in her mollycoddled father's routine, too spirited to share or settle for his got-it-all apathy.

♦♦ Samuel Wigley

SYNOPSIS Los Angeles, the present. Film star Johnny Marco falls and breaks his wrist during a shoot. While recuperating he stays at Chateau Marmont, an exclusive Hollywood hotel. Identical twin pole dancers perform for him in his room. He attends a press conference, a photo call and a party, all without enthusiasm. He falls asleep during sex with a woman he has met at the party.

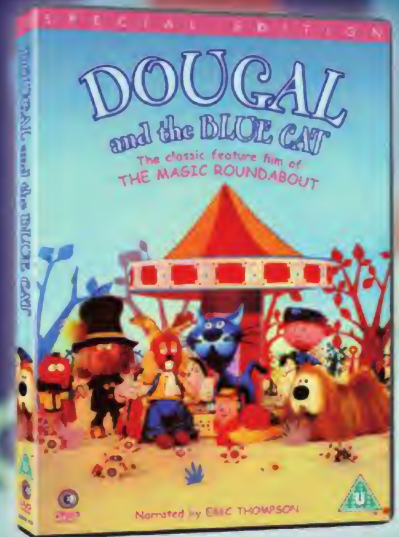
Johnny takes his 11-year-old daughter Cleo to her ice-skating practice and watches her graceful movements. Later, his estranged wife drops Cleo off to stay with Johnny at the hotel for a while. The pair spend time together at the hotel, along with a childhood friend of Johnny's. Gradually it seems that Cleo is having a reviving influence on her father.

Cleo's mother tells Johnny that she needs more time alone, so Johnny is forced to take his daughter with him on a trip to Milan to promote a new film and collect an award. During a sleepless night in an Italian hotel, they order a midnight feast. When Cleo is asleep, Johnny creeps out of their room for a tryst with a fellow guest.

Back in the US, Johnny and his daughter spend time together in Las Vegas. They then take a helicopter to get Cleo to summer camp. At the moment of parting, Johnny apologises for not being around for her in the past, but his words are drowned out by the sound of the helicopter. Returning to Chateau Marmont, Johnny takes his Ferrari for a drive out of Los Angeles; on a desert road, he gets out and begins to walk, abandoning the car.

BEWARE THE BLUE VOICE!

Dougal and
The Blue Cat
finally available
on 

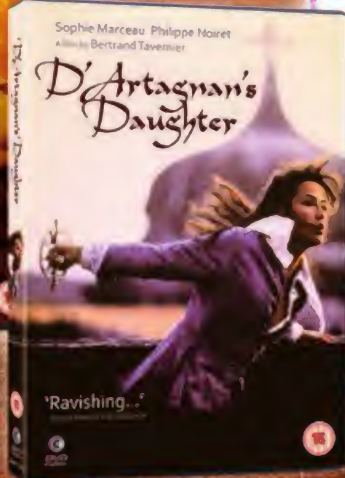



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Fenella Fielding, Mark Kermode
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www.secondsightfilms.co.uk

CREDITS

Directed by
Sofia Coppola
Producers
G. Mac Brown
Roman Coppola
Sofia Coppola
Written by
Sofia Coppola
Director of Photography
Harris Savides
Film Editor
Sarah Flack
Production Designer
Anne Ross
Music Score
Phoenix

@Somewhere LLC
Production Companies
Focus Features presents
in association with Pathé
Distribution, Medusa
Film, Tohokushinsha an
American Zoetrope
production
Italy Unit Production
Service Company: Some
of Us
Executive Producers
Francis Ford Coppola
Paul Rassam
Fred Roos
for Some of Us:
Michele Anzalone
Roberta Senesi
Producer
Italy Unit:
Jordan Stone
Line Producer
Yvonne Henley
Unit Production Manager
G. Mac Brown
Production Manager
Italy Unit:
Roberta Isaja
Production Co-ordinators
Sydney Huynh
Italy Unit:
Patrizia Roletti
Location Managers
Stephenson Crossley
Italy Unit:
Sergio Davidovich
Post-production Supervisor
Stuart MacPhee
Assistant Directors
1st: Rod Smith
2nd: Joe Roddey
Italy Unit
1st: Jordan Stone
2nd: Franco Basaglia
Script Supervisor
Jayne-Ann Tenggren
Casting
Courtney Bright
Nicole Daniels
Italy Unit:
Luisa Pacchetti
Camera Operator
Harris Savides
Gaffers
Chns Culliton
Italy Unit:
Felice Guzzi
Key Grips
Jamie Lagerhausen

Italy Unit:
Piero Fabbri
Visual Effects Supervisor:
Syd Dutton
Producer:
Scott Tinter
Art Directors
Shane Valentino
Italy Unit:
Andrea Rosso
Set Decorator
Fainche MacCarthy
Property Masters
Ritchie Kremer
Italy Unit:
Walter Saro
Costume Designer
Stacey Battat
Costume Supervisor
Patricia McLaughlin
Make-up Supervisor
Darlene Jacobs
Make-up/Hair
Italy Unit:
Milena DiGirolamo
Carmen Amaro
Old Age Make-up Designer
Jordu Schell
Hair Supervisor
Johnny Villanueva
Hair Stylists
Patricia Gundlach
Italy Unit:
Jack Abernethy
Title Design
Peter Miles
Additional Music
William Storkson
Soundtrack
"Love like a Sunset Part I",
"Love like a Sunset Part II" – Phoenix; "My Hero"
– Foo Fighters; "1 Thing"
– Amerie, contains a
sample of "Oh Calcutta"
– The Meters; "Cool" –
Gwen Stefani; "Love
Theme from Kiss" – Kiss;
"Look" – Sebastien
Teller; "Smoke Gets in
Your Eyes" – Bryan Ferry;
"Gandhi Fix", "Massage
Music" by William
Storkson; "So Lonely" –
The Police; "20th
Century Boy" – T. Rex;
"Che si fa" – Valeria
Marini; "Teddy Bear" –
Romulo; "I'll Try Anything
Once" – The Strokes
Sound Designer
Richard Beggs
Sound Mixer
Susumu Tokunow
Re-recording Mixers
Richard Beggs
Roy Waldspurger
Supervising Sound Editors
Richard Beggs
Michael Kirchberger
Stunt Co-ordinator
Robert Nagle
Telegraph Consultant
Italy Unit:
Daniele Soragni

CAST

Stephen Dorff
Johnny Marco
Elle Fanning
Cleo
Chris Pontius
Sammy
Erin Wasson
party girl 1
Alexandra Williams
party girl 2
Nathalie Fay
party girl 3
Kristina Shannon
Bambi
Kanissa Shannon
Cindy
John Prudhont
chateau patio waiter
Ruby Corley
patio girl
Angela Lindvall
blonde in Mercedes
Maryna Linchuk
Meghan Collision
Jessica Miller
vampire models
Lala Sloatman
Layla
Renee Roca
ice skating instructor
Aurélien Wiik
French guy
Lauren Hastings
pretty girl
Amanda Anka
Marge
Ellie Kemper
Claire
Brian Gattas
studio PR man
Randa Walker
eager PR woman
Michelle Monaghan
Rebecca
Sylvia Desrochers
Rebecca's publicist
Christopher James Taylor
press photographer
Silvia Bizio
Italian journalist
Noel De Souza
Indian journalist
Lisa Lu
Chinese journalist
Alexander Nevsky
Russian journalist
Aida Takla-O'Reilly
Egyptian journalist
Emanuel Levy
Israeli journalist
H.J. Park
Korean journalist
Jordu Schell
Joey Rocket
Jack Firman Jr
SFX make-up artists
lo Bottoms
receptionist
Paul Greene
Ron the masseur
Eliza Coupe
hotel room neighbour
Nicole Trunfio
brunette bikini beauty
Tim Starks
LAX VIP services
Mary McNeal
airline rep
Ferruccio Calamari
Milan VIP handler
Antonio Bracciani
Milan airport policeman
Davide Borella
hotel manager, Milan
Nunzio Alfredo 'Pupi' D'Angieri
Pupi
Jo Champa
Pupi's wife
Greta Zamparini
Pupi's PR
Stefano Fiorentino
young rich man
Laura Chiatti
Sylvia
Giorgia Surina
Italian TV reporter
Simona Ventura
Nino Frassica
Telegatto hosts
Maurizio Nichetti
Telegatto award recipient
Valeria Marini
Telegatto special guest
Paola Turani
Marica Pellegrinelli
Telegatto girls
Martina Chiriacio
Jennifer Iacono
Angela Lanotte
Simona Lucia Tauro
Telegatto dancers
Marco Gandolfi Vannini
Italian limo driver
Philip Pavel
hotel manager
Romulo Laki
Damilo
Danián Delgado
Victor
Laura Ramsey
naked blonde with sailor
cap
Nathalie Love
young wasted girl
Caitlin Keats
chateau lobby guest
David Jean Thomas
casino croupier
Peter McKernan
helicopter pilot
Patrick McKernan
helicopter ground safety
C.C. Sheffield
woman getting haircut
Ray Garcia
parking valet
[uncredited]
Benicio Del Toro
celebrity
Dolby Digital/DTS
In Colour
Prints by
Technicolor
[LBS:1]
Distributor
Universal Pictures
International UK & Eire
8,781 ft +14 frames



Humour by-pass: John E. Regan

Spiderhole

Ireland/Canada 2010

Director: Daniel Simpson

With Emma Griffiths Malin,
Reuben Henry Biggs, Amy Noble
Certificate 18 81m 22s

If you wanted to be generous to Daniel Simpson's ultra-low-budget British take on torture porn, you could call it a neat comment on contemporary politics. Four students, reduced to squatting, have their bodies rather than their budgets slashed by a member of the middle-class establishment (one with links to the health services and the armed forces, what's more), making it a potentially excoriating critique of hipster culture's exoticisation of working-class life. For make no mistake, these students are middle class through and through, from their cut-glass accents to their mobile phones to the fact that, when considering their options, they are able to dismiss the possibility of going

home to mum and dad with a wrinkle of their pretty upturned noses.

That interpretation would, however, be generous indeed. For there's no secret to *Spiderhole's* ideological slant: the film is a flagrant stab at cashing in on the notoriety and box-office clout of a genre with little to say but 'show me the money'. *Spiderhole* was produced in 2009, so the visual and thematic confluences with Tom Six's *Human Centipede* (a maniacal medic, an isolated house, a female lead whose ultimate fate suggests that hope no longer has a place in contemporary horror) are fair enough. But there's something so humourless about *Spiderhole* – and so schematic – that it can't help but feel like it was run off quickly to capitalise on the zeitgeist. Its eye-gouging centrepiece smacks of *Jeepers Creepers* without the camp; its villain makes *Centipede's* Dr Heiter look like a well-rounded psychological portrait; its repeated shots of a porcelain mask and its stereotyped sexualities (the alpha male, the wimp, the tramp, the virgin) seem to reference any number of horror classics yet serve only to underline how



Going round in circles: Stephen Dorff

inadequate it is by comparison. True, *Spiderhole* is set in a locked house, but it's a film that goes nowhere.

All of which would be disappointing enough, given that Simpson has a keen eye for framing, colour and texture: the film certainly looks like the lovechild of Klimt and Bosch. But worse is to come with the final twist, which shoehorns in a nasty subplot seemingly inspired by the real-life cases of Josef Fritzl and Natascha Kampusch. It's not a crime, of course, to put such real-life events to artistic use; inspired by the same material, the novelist Emma Donoghue has produced a compassionate if flawed work in *Room*, as has Giorgos Lanthimos with *Dogtooth*, while Ulrich Seidl is rumoured to be working on a documentary on the Fritzl case. But Seidl's film will undoubtedly have a great deal more to say on the matter, with more sensitivity, and frankly can't fail to be more harrowing. Cynical exploitation, thy name is *Spiderhole*.

✦ Catherine Wheatley

CREDITS

Directed by
Daniel Simpson
Produced by
Patrick O'Neill
Written by
Daniel Simpson
Director of Photography
Vincent Borison
Editors
Jeremiah Munge
Johnny Megalos
Production Designer
Daihi Magner
Music
Jason Cooper
Oliver Kraus

©Spiderhole Productions, Ltd.
Production Companies
A Spiderhole production in association with Magnet Film & Digital
A Daniel Simpson film
Executive Producers
Alan O'Sullivan
Joanne O'Sullivan
Nick Sorbara
Kevin Hannafin
Associate Producer
Vincent Borison
Unit Production Manager
Patrick O'Neill
Post-production Supervisor
Vincent Borison
Assistant Director
1st: Pamela Cordeiro
Continuity
George Doyle
B Camera
News Reporter Shoot
Maurice O'Carroll
Gaffer/Key Grip
Sean Hearn
Visual Effects
Redlab
Tinpot
Artail
Set Decorators
Steve Murray
Daihi Marley
Props Master
Kevin Goodman
Make-up/Make-up Effects
Sam Sheehan
Vocals on Fire Side Song
Lucy Cooper
Guitar on Folk Song
William Dorey
Soundtrack
"Delirium"; "Bicycle Ride"; "Van Journey"

Sound Design/Editing
Ben Swarbrick
Annelise Noronha
Gavin Wheelahan
Rob Melamed
Bill Hermans
Ryan McLammon
Sound Mixer
Alphonse A. Lanza
Sound Mixed by
Annelise Noronha
Ben Swarbrick

CAST

Emma Griffiths Malin
Molly Kaine
Reuben Henry Biggs
Luke
Amy Noble
Zoe
George Maguire
Toby
John E. Regan
the captor
Moya Farrell
doctor
Kevin Hannafin
art school teacher
Malcolm George
news reporter
Kevin Goodman
waiting room patient 1
Alphonse A. Lanza
waiting room patient 2
Alanna Maharaj
doctor's receptionist
Aoife Mahony
young Daisy Cregg
Stephanie Tobin
older Daisy Cregg
Petra Skodova
art class model
Joanne O'Sullivan
Niamh Hennessey
Gary Brosnan
Deirdre Mahony
Samuel Kemp
Andreas Gomez
Pizarro
Osvaldo De Quandos
Laura O'Sullivan
Liam Hewson
Jerry Fitzgerald
Daniel Riordan
art class students

Dolby Digital
In Colour
[2.35:1]

Distributor
Soda Pictures
7,323 ft +0 frames

The Thorn in the Heart

France 2009

Director: Michel Gondry

Perhaps the most resonant, terrifying scenes in Michel Gondry's film work to date are the sequences in *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004) in which Jim Carrey's character fights against his memories being gradually deleted from his brain; so it is understandable why Gondry should want to make a film about his septuagenarian aunt, Suzette. A low-key *divertissement* after big-budget fantasies, *The Thorn in the Heart* is an attempt to preserve on film the much loved matriarch of his extended family, both providing a warm tribute to her while she's still around to appreciate it, and bottling the memory of her for the ages.

Like most home-movie attempts to capture family life, however, the results are likely to be rigidly uninvolved for non-Gondrys. The film opens with a joke at the dinner table in which Suzette can barely get the words out for laughing; an appealing sense of conviviality is established but the sauerkraut story is too garbled for us to share in it. It sets the tone for an intimate but opaque film which gives little explanation as to who relates to whom, or why Suzette is a worthwhile subject.

Comprising interviews with family members and old acquaintances, and illustrated with grainy Super-8 footage, *The Thorn in the Heart* is broken into chapters defined by place and time. Each of these is introduced by stop-motion animated interludes featuring a model train pulling into a new station and finds Gondry's aunt revisiting some of the Cévennes villages where she worked as a primary-school teacher. By far the most enchanting scene is one in which she brings 'invisible cloaks' for the children of one of her

old schools, a fantasy that her nephew – with the aid of bluescreen – is able to make delightfully real. Only here do we intuit that Suzette's teaching may have been other than ordinary.

The grist for Gondry's whimsy comes from touching on the strained relationship between Suzette and her troubled son Jean-Yves, who partly blames his mother for his emotional instability and claims that she initially kept his father's death from him. Gondry doesn't shy away from dredging up hurt on both sides, and you wonder how these painful scenes play when we later see the family watching the rushes en masse. For the outsider, these raw, unresolved tensions would have made a more compelling focus than the aunt's trips down memory lane. ♥ Samuel Wigley

CREDITS

Directed by
Michel Gondry
Produced by
Georges Bermann
Written by
Michel Gondry
Director of Photography
Jean-Louis Bompont
Editor
Marie-Charlotte Moreau

©Partizan Films
Production Company
Partizan Films presents a film by Michel Gondry
Production Manager
Khalid Tahhar
Production Supervisor
Aurélien Durand
Post-production Supervisor
Jean-Gabriel Saint-Paul
Director of Photography
Animated Sequences:
Eric Vain
Super 8 Archives
Cameraman
Jean-Yves Gondry
Special Effects
Sequence 'Invisible Children'
Partizanlab:
Muriel Archambaud
Animation
Valérie Person
Additional Editing
Enka Barroche
Marie-Pierre Frappier

Stylist
Florence Jamois
Titles
Partizanlab:
Mathieu Betard
Soundtrack
"My Lie F"; "Comme un enfant"; "Don't Look Back" – Spleen;
"Surface Tension" – Ensemble HCD-Productions; "Epine 1"; "Epine 2" by Etienne Charry; "Well, Well, Cornelius" – John Tilbury; "Le Petit Train de la mémoire"; "Under the Elder" – Howard Skempton; "Little Monsters" – Charlotte Gainsbourg; "Lonely Lonely" – Feist
Sound Recordists
Guillaume Le Bras
Claire-Anne Langeron
Sound Re-recording
François Loubeyre
Supervising Sound Editor
Laurent d'Herbécourt

WITH

Suzette Gondry
Jean-Yves Gondry
Sasha Allard
Allard family
Rémi André
Lucas Andreo
Laura Arjailes
Jean-Louis Arrigas
Sophie Balderelli
Balderelli family
Viviane Bastide
Henri Bec
Gabrielle Bell
Denis Bertaux
Denis Bertavy
Denise Berthezène
Francis Bertot
Gérard Bertrand
Pierre Bertrand
Lucie Blanc
Nathalie Boucknooghe
Mathis Boucknooghe
André Boudes
Marie-Thérèse Boudes
Yori Bouissieren
Tony Bouissieren
Isabelle Bouissieren
Mr Boyer
Denise Boyer
Régis Calazel
Georgette Calazel
Yohan Carter
Marine Causse
Karine Causse
Mireille Cavagna
Caylus family
Lydie Chabal
Benoît Chaffrat
Romain Chambon
Thierry Chaban
Liliane Chartre
Anthony Choquet
Roger Cinq
Cornou Julia
Mme Comte
Christelle Cuvillier
Françoise Daux
Manon Daux
Marie-Cécile Daux
Mélanie Delenne
Delenne family
Mr Denis
Arnaud Derrouite
Samuel Dubail
Emma Dubail
Romain Duffour
Patricia Durand
Michel Etienne
Thomas Ferrera-Pialot
Claudine Finiels
Bernard Finiels
Seph Fraisse
Celine Gartyrayre
Manon Gely
Iléna Gely
Isabelle Gely
Gintrand Bernar
Giselle Giraud
Raymonde Giraud
Sonia Gondry
Michel Gondry
Pierre Gondry
Jules Gondry
François Gondry
Paul Gondry
Nina Grignola
Véronique Grignola
Bilo Guilleux
Ludovic Guillaume
Oona Ibar
Evelyne Jacquemert-Ollier
Romain Jacquet
Marc Jacquet
Denis Jalliet
Teddy Julian
Fabien Jouanno
Wissem Khaldi
Nadia Khaldi

M. Ladaux
Georges Ladaux
Noëlle Lapize
Francis Lapize
Michel Le Valdeyron
Didier Lebois
Guillaume Le Bras
Paul Lemaire
Thérèse Libourel
Philippe Libourel
Nelson Lombard
Madeleine Macq
Alain Martin
Mathieu Maurin
Marc Messager
Valérie Messager
Luc Messager
Messager family
Raphael Miniou-Choquet
Ludovic Mongnoux
Vanessa Mongnoux
Yvette Navarro
Claude Navarro
Jean-Michel Navarro
Virginie Nazon
Mme Ollier
Guillaume Parisot
Romain Parisot
Florence Parisot
Tonin Passet
Léo Passet
Passet family
Enzo Pidet
Deborah Pidet
Mme Pidet
Guy Piqu
Monique Piqu
Jean-Louis Pontalier
Jonathan Pouzens
Isac Reilhan
Florent Reilhan
Lucas Reilhan
Anne Reilhan
Hugo Reilhan
Florent Reilma
Olivier Reilhan
Colette Richard
Jacques Robert
Gabrielle Roux
Catherine Sarrañ
Emma Séquier
Brian Stavechny
Irène Stephan
Nadine Stessels
Francis Stessels
Sandrine Trubert
Etienne Vedrines
Ludovic Zanora

In Colour/Black and White
[1.66:1]
Subtitles

Distributor
Soda Pictures

French theatrical title
L'Epine dans le cœur
Onscreen English subtitle
Thorn in the Heart



The insider: 'The Thorn in the Heart'

SYNOPSIS A documentary portrait of filmmaker Michel Gondry's septuagenarian aunt, Suzette Gondry, consisting of interviews with her and other members of the extended family filmed at their home in the Cévennes region. Suzette revisits many of the village primary schools where she worked as a teacher, and encounters some of her former students, now adults. Her son Jean-Yves speaks of his mental breakdown, blaming his mother for exacerbating his emotional difficulties. The family watch the footage and joke about their matriarch being a film star.

Unstoppable

USA/United Kingdom/
Australia 2010

Director: Tony Scott

With Denzel Washington, Chris
Pine, Rosario Dawson, Kevin Dunn
Certificate 12A 98m 24s

Sometimes a film is literally the
biggest train set a boy ever had.

Tony Scott's *Unstoppable* is something of a throwback – unironic, but quietly so – to the disaster-stroke-action movies of pre-CGI yore. A runaway freight train whose cargo includes deadly molten phenol is heading for derailment on an elevated bend – above a fuel depot, what's more – in downtown Stanton, Pennsylvania. "We're talking about a missile the size of the Chrysler Building," says clear-headed yardmaster Connie (Rosario Dawson), in the midst of a slanging match with her bosses, who put profits above public safety. Only grizzled veteran driver Frank (Denzel Washington) and his greenhorn conductor Will (Chris Pine), whose initial status-and-age-based antagonism will be softened as their mutual trust grows, can stop the unstoppable and avert tragedy.

Gone are the mannerisms of mid-2000s Scott. Like his last runaway-train movie, *The Taking of Pelham 123* (2009), called "square" by David Bordwell, *Unstoppable* is undoubtedly four-cornered, give or take the odd squiggle; but Scott has compensated for its lack of unmotivated stock manipulation and random reframings by shooting what are probably his best suspense sequences since *Crimson Tide* (1995), his first collaboration with Washington. Then the righteous subordinate under Gene Hackman, Washington is now the old hand, with *Star Trek*'s Chris Pine as the upstart, fast rising within the company because of his family's influence in the union. Whereas the earlier film was a fairly balanced drama that resolved in favour of the by-the-book younger officer, *Unstoppable* never doubts the wisdom of experience.

Indeed, within the film's Hawksian drama of trust among blue-collar professionals – principally Connie and Frank – Pine's character is an ornamental encumbrance most of the time, despite his billing. Connie, ensconced in a control room, has never met Frank but sides with him against the suits, whose decision-making process is corrupted by talk of stock devaluation and costs, and who display an arrogant – crucially unprofessional – disdain for anything their employees might have to say. *Unstoppable*'s big air-punch moment is Frank and Chris telling them to shove it. But unlike Hackman's character in the earlier film, Frank is no martinet, and respects different kinds of knowledge. At the film's climax he and Connie take the advice of a federal safety inspector, another stranger, played by Kevin Corrigan.

Scott's very first short, the American Civil War story *One of the Missing* (1968), produced – the interest must be declared – by this magazine's publisher,



Blue collar: Chris Pine, Denzel Washington

the BFI, announced not only the arrival of a gifted action director, but one with an interest in rendering subjective experience on film. What seems to have been substituted for that, certainly since *Enemy of the State* (1998), is an obsession with mimicking surveillance and communications technology; but whereas the new emphasis made thematic sense in that film and others, here it just gets in the way. Too often we watch Frank and Will's acts of heroism with an inane newscaster's commentary – conveying the experience of watching the action unfold on TV – rather than being put through the mill with them.

The media hullabaloo and the repeated shots of videophone-wielding civilians lining the train's route also rather undercut the putative threat posed by its cargo, and after a shameless early scene in which a trainload of schoolchildren almost get into a smash-up, there's a slight deficiency in the more widespread danger that Connie's Chrysler Building line implies. Though a few more jokes wouldn't have gone amiss, *Unstoppable*'s moodiness is of a

piece with its depressed Rust Belt setting, and its engagement with geographical space, moreover in a part of the US not often represented on film, is what distinguishes it.

♦♦ Henry K. Miller

CREDITS

Directed by

Tony Scott

Produced by

Julie Yorn

Tony Scott

Mimi Rogers

Eric McLeod

Alex Young

Written by

Mark Bombard

Director of

Photography

Ben Seresin

Film Editors

Chris Lebenzon

Robert Duffy

Production Designer

Chris Seigers

Music

Harry Gregson-Williams

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Film Corporation and

Dune Entertainment III

LLC (in all territories)

except Brazil, Italy,
Japan, Korea and Spain)

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Company, Twentieth

Century Fox Film

Corporation and Dune

Entertainment III LLC (in

Brazil, Italy, Japan,

Korea and Spain)

Production

Companies

Twentieth Century Fox

presents in association

with Dune

Entertainment a

Prospect Park/Scott

Free production

A Tony Scott film

Produced in association

with Ingenious Media

Made in association

with Big Screen

Productions

Executive Producers

Chris Ciaffa

Rick Yorn

Jeff Kwatnetz

Co-producers

Adam Sommer

Skip Chaisson

Lee Trink

Diane Sabatini

Associate Producers

Tom Moran

Janice Polley

Unit Production

Managers

Eric McLeod

Railroad Unit:

Scott Elias

Production

Supervisors

Jennifer Conroy

Railroad Unit:

Scott Allen Logan

Production

Co-ordinator

Lisa Dietrick

Supervising Location

Manager

Janice Polley

Location Managers

Julie Hannum

Pennsylvania:

James A. Mahathey

Post-production

Supervisor

Michael Tinger

Assistant Directors

1st: Adam Sommer

2nd: Eric Richard Lasko

Script Supervisor

Julie Pittkanen

Casting

Denise Chamian

Pittsburgh:

Donna Belajac

Aerial Director

of Photography

David B. Nowell

Pursuit Arm Director

of Photography

Brooks P. Guyer

Camera Operators

Martin Schaefer

John Skotchdopole

Darin Moran

Mark Meyers

Aerial: Scott C. Smith

Steadicam Operator

Mark Meyers

Chief Lighting

Technician

Jack English

Key Grip

Thomas Gibson

Visual Effects

Supervisor

Nathan McGinness

Visual Effects

Asylum Visual Effects

Additional:

Eye Spy Productions

Special Effects

Supervisor:

John Frazier

Co-ordinator:

Joseph Pancake

Art Directors

Andrew Boughton

Dawn Swiderski

Julian Ashby

Set Designers

Gregory A.

Weimerskirch

J. Andrew Chaintreuil

Aaron Hays

Set Decorator

Rosemary Brandenburg

Property Master

Eugene McCarthy

Construction

Co-ordinator

Dale DeStefani

Costume Designer

Penny Rose

Costume Supervisor

Stacy M. Horn

Department Head

Make-up Artist

Edouard F. Henriques III

Key Make-up Artist

Diane Heller

Tattoo Artist

Mark Mahoney

Department Head Hair

Stylist

Yolanda Toussieing

Hair Designer

Danny Moudjian

Main Title/Graphic

Design

Skip Film

End Titles

Scarlett Letters

Additional Music

Justin Burnett

Orchestrator

Ladd McIntosh

Soundtrack

"Work" – Ciara featuring

Missy Elliott; "Fox News

Service Theme" by

Robert Israel; "Country

Boy" – Alan Jackson;

"Ride of the Valkyries"

by Richard Wagner;

"Driving My Young Life

Away" – Wayne Hancock; "National Guard Part 1"; "Power Struggle"; "Predator Arrival" from AVPR; *Alien vs Predator Requiem* by Brian Tyler; "Juice (Live Mix)" – GMS
Production Sound Mixer
 William B. Kaplan
Sound Mixing
 Kevin O'Connell
 Beau Borders
Supervising Sound Editor
 Mark P. Stoeckinger
Stunt Co-ordinator
 Gary Powell
Technical Advisers
 Terry Forson
 Jess Knowlton
Technical Consultant
 Jon Hosfeld

CAST

Denzel Washington
 Frank Barnes
Chris Pine
 Will Colson
Rosario Dawson
 Connie Hooper
Kevin Dunn
 Gavin
Ethan Suplee
 Dewey
Kevin Corrigan
 Inspector Werner
Lew Temple
 Ned
Kevin Chapman
 Bunny
T.J. Miller
 Gillette
Jessy Schram
 Darcy
David Warshofsky
 Judd Stewart
Andy Umberger
 Janeway
Elizabeth Mathis
 Nicole
Meagan Tandy
 Maya
Dylan L. Bruce
 Michael Colson
Jeff Hochendoner
 Clark
Ryan Aherm
 Ryan Scott
Christopher Lee
 Phillips
Baker
Kevin McClatchy
 Hoffman
Toni Saladna
 Gavin's assistant
Patrick F. McDade
 Captain Allen
Bill Laing
 red truck driver
Scott A. Martin
 Brewster dispatcher
Richard Pelzman
 Devereaux
Lissa Brennan
 diner waitress
Barry Ben Sr
 Findlay police officer
Heather Leigh
 Findlay reporter
Carla Bianco
 horse trailer owner
Keith Michael Gregory
 hazmat worker
L. Derek Leonidoff
 FRA official
Aisha Hinds
 railway safety campaign co-ordinator
Khalio Walker
Gilda Estelle Chestney
 Kam Bott
Kevin Bott
Max Schuler
 hero kids
Gretchen Bluemle
 Mane, checkout girl
Diane Jonardi
 Mrs Hermann, old lady
Corey Parker Robinson
 lead officer 1
Christopher Stadulis
 police officer 2

Alicia Murton
 teacher
David Flick
 train engineer
Jeff Wincott
 Jesse, Will's brother
Nathan Hollabaugh
 young cop
Rebecca Harris
 Pauline
Mike Clark
 news reporter 4
William Ward III
 reporter 2
Jennifer Boresz
 reporter 3
Victor Gojcaj
 groundsman
Maxx Hennard
 tower operator
Joe Coyle
 CEO golfer 1
Dihlon McManne
 CEO golfer 2
Charles Van Eman
 CEO golfer 3
Joshua Elijah Reese
 young engineer
Tom Stoviak
 news reporter 5
Ellen Gamble
 news reporter 6
Shelby Campitella
 news reporter 7
John D. Leonard
 Brewster man 1
Thomas Riley
 Brewster man 2
Jeremiah Fragale
 cop
Jason McCune
 radar gun cop
Adrienne Wehr
 news reporter 8
Adam Kroloff
 railroad spokesperson
Jake Andolina
 evacuation police officer
Jarrold DiGiorgi
 control room staff 1
Tami Dixon
 control room staff 2
Sean Derry
 control room staff 3
Amy Arce
 TV reporter
Matt Cates
 state trooper
Rick Chambers
 news reporter 1
Chase Ellison
 teenage witness
Juan M. Fernandez
 white shirt reporter
Steven Gonzales
 another news reporter
Rick Rader
 train employee witness
Carly Steel
 female reporter in helicopter
Warren Sweeney
 press representative
Stephen Monroe
 Taylor
Stephen Nelson
 reporter at Keating summit

Dolby Digital/DTS/ SDDS
Colour/Prints by DeLuxe
[2.35:1]

Distributor
 20th Century Fox International (UK)

8,855 ft +7 frames

Waiting for "Superman"

Director: Davis Guggenheim
Certificate PG 111m 8s

American moviegoers have recently received a slate of documentary diagnoses for what ails their superpower: a corrupt finance industry (*Inside Job*), outdated vote distorting (*Gerrymandering*), wasteful environmental policy (*Cool It*) and a broken education system (*Waiting for "Superman"*). The director of *Waiting*, Davis Guggenheim, previously directed a movie tracking state-school teachers (*The First Year*, 2001) but made his name by turning the global-warming lecture *An Inconvenient Truth* into a wonky hit in 2006. Here he capably presents a story of failing schools and striving students that's engaging and well paced, but his incomplete account simplifies the debate over the issues to the point of rendering the movie an unreliable voice.

Interspersed with snappy animated summaries of American education policy, Guggenheim's film focuses on five children and their parents, and the efforts of one city schools superintendent to make reforms. The kids are extremely cute in the main, their mothers inspiring dedicated and quietly compelling; the reforming official, one Michelle Rhee of Washington DC (who has since resigned), is a clean-the-house pragmatist intended to throw the absurdities of bloated bureaucracy and entrenched teachers' unions into relief. Because according to Guggenheim, "the most intractable problem in all of education" – apparently more than poverty or government budgets – is the teachers' union, which he claims gives tenure to the incompetent and stymies extensive change. But Guggenheim's one-prong argument raises suspicion, as does his unquestioning endorsement of Bush-instituted national testing and the 'charter' schools that are presented as the ideal replacement for abysmal state schools. It's telling that he reaches for clips from *The Simpsons* and *School of Rock* when putting down the teachers' unions, securing his audience with the easy dig.

SYNOPSIS A documentary about public (state) education in the US. As director Davis Guggenheim takes his children to private schools, he expresses concern over the public schools he passes on the way. He introduces five children (Anthony, Daisy, Francisco, Bianca and Emily) who are hoping to win coveted places at charter schools in Washington DC, Los Angeles and New York.

The film introduces educators such as Harlem teacher Geoffrey Canada, who observes how minority students especially begin to fail after fifth grade, and Michelle Rhee, superintendent of schools in Washington DC and an ambitious reformer of entrenched bureaucracy. It is suggested that abuses of teachers' tenure are a major obstacle to reforming education in schools. The charter schools are presented as a possible solution but these offer only limited places for applicants. Rhee's reforms are stymied by the teachers' union.

The film shows that whereas America's education system used to lead the world, now it cannot meet demand for college-ready students; nevertheless, pupils at the national KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) charter schools do achieve top scores, as do those at Geoffrey Canada's Harlem school.

Anthony, Daisy, Francisco, Bianca and Emily wait to hear whether they have won places at the charter schools in their areas. Only two gain admission.



Harlem on my mind: Geoffrey Canada

Not that Guggenheim doesn't also poke a little fun at his fellow Americans: his use of the statistical cliché that Americans trail other nations in maths is leavened with the students' one curious success – they're number one in confidence (cue disastrous stunt-bike footage). And the segments with the students and their families can be deeply affecting: when a mother expresses her mixed feelings about her child going away to school, it encapsulates the tug of family versus the benefits of educational advancement.

But Guggenheim's grasp of rhetoric is often clumsy, as with the awkward finally-we-have-a-title feel to the Superman tag (based on extraordinary Harlem educator Geoffrey Canada's childhood wish for a way of sweeping away life's problems) and a pointless use of Chuck Yeager (fixing schools is as hard as breaking the sound barrier because... nobody thought it could be done!). Likewise the film's suspenseful climax – showing the five students in their respective cities waiting in bingo-like gym settings to find out if they've won a place at a charter school – yields mixed feelings. On the one hand, we feel their hope, fear, anger and pain – and above all the cruel indignity and absurdity of such a process. But on the other hand, Guggenheim tilts their hardship perilously towards the hoary form of a contest documentary: again, narrative trumps all.

As with so many films about parents and children, *Waiting* will strike a chord with several constituencies. But despite Guggenheim's opening claim to have conflicted feelings about sending his own kids to private schools, his film still has the long, winding feel of someone agreeing, slowly but surely, with himself. **✦ Nicolas Rapold**
Credits for this film were unavailable at the time of going to press and will be published in the February issue

CREDITS UPDATE

The reviews of these films were published in our December issue but credits were unavailable at the time of going to press. We are still waiting for credits for *Adrift* and *Jackass 3D*.

The Edge of Dreaming

United Kingdom/USA/The Netherlands/Germany 2010
Certificate: not submitted 73m

CREDITS

Directed by
 Amy Hardie
Producers
 Amy Hardie
 George Chignell
 Doug Block
 Lori Cheatle
Filmed by
 Amy Hardie
Film Editor
 Ling Lee
 ©Amy Hardie Productions
Production Companies
 An Amy Hardie/Passion Pictures/Hardworking Movies co-production with VPRO, More4, ZDF/Arte
 Supported by the National Lottery through Scottish Screen
Executive Producers
 for Channel Four:
 Tabitha Jackson
 for VPRO:
 Barbara Truyen
 for Scottish Screen:
 Robbie Allen
 for ZDF/Arte:
 Doris Hepp
 for POV:
 Simon Kilmurray
Camera
 Amy Hardie
 Ian Dodds
 Hardie family
Animator
 Cameron Duguid
Additional/Supervising Editors
 Colin Monie
 Michael Culyba

Additional Music
 Eli Hardie Howes
 Gunnar Öskarsson
Soundtrack
 "Intro" – Eli Hardie Howes; "Little Bitty Pretty Things" – Thurston Harris; "Ice Breaker"; "Last Song" – Gunnar Öskarsson; "Ali Baba" – Treasure Isle
Sound Designer
 Gunnar Öskarsson
Dubbing Mixer
 Paul McFadden

WITH

Amy Hardie
Professor Mark Solms
Claudia Goncalves
Phyllida Anamaire
Dr Amy Mindell
Dr Arnie Mindell

In Colour
[1.78:1]

Distributor
 Cinefile World

UK television version title
Dangerous Dreams
 More4 tx 19 October 2010

US television version title
The Edge of Dreaming
 PBS tx 24 August 2010



'The Edge of Dreaming'

CREDITS UPDATE

An Ordinary Execution

France 2009

Certificate 12A 105m 8s

CREDITS

A film by
Marc Dugain
Produced by
Jean-Louis Livi
Screenplay/
Adaptation/Dialogue
Marc Dugain
based on his novel *Une*
Exécution ordinaire
Director of
Photography
Yves Angelo
Editor
Fabrice Rouaud
Art Director
Yves Fournier

©F Comme Film,
StudioCanal, France 3
Cinéma

Production Companies
F Comme Film presents
an F Comme Film,
StudioCanal, France 3
Cinéma co-production
with the participation of
Canal+, TPS Star,
France Télévisions in
association with
Cinéma 3 and with
the support of La Région
Île-de-France
In partnership with
Centre national du
cinéma et de l'image
animée

Executive Producers
Julie Salvador
Romania Unit:
Atlantis Films
Ion Marinescu
Russia Unit:
Fibr Film Production
Anton Belin
Marina Diachenko

Production Managers
Christophe Jeauffroy
Romania Unit:
Marius Bratu
Post-production
Supervisors
Christelle Didier
Guy Courtcuisse

Assistant Directors
1st: Patrice Armissen
2nd: Nathalie Déposé
Romania Unit
Daniel Barbulescu
Mihai Niculescu
Script Supervisor
Lydia Bigard
Casting
Tatiana Vialle
Constance Demontoy

Steadicam Operator
Pierre-Hugues Gallien
Gaffer
Rachid Madaoui
Key Grip
Hervé Rousset
Visual Effects
Del2shoot
Art Director
Romania Unit:
Iulian Rentea

Set Decorator
Clémentine Marchand
Properties
Bernard Bridon
Construction Manager
Angelo Zamparutti
Costume Designer
Jackie Budin
Costumes
Romania Unit:
Victoria Dragomir
Key Make-up

Danièle Vuarn
Make-up
Romania Unit:
Violeta Mannescu
Stalin Make-up
Created by
Nathalie Tissier
Key Special Make-up
Effects
Fabrice Herbet
Special Make-up
Effects
Stéphane Chauvet
Key Hair Stylist
Jean-Jacques Puchu
Lapeyrade
Stalin Hair Created by
Christina Oihund-Lago

Titles
Del2shoot:
Fred Roz
Soundtrack
"Hymne National de
Russie" – Red Army
Choir; "12erme
Symphonie Op.112 'The
Year 1917'; 'Il Aurora' by
Dmitri Shostakovich –
Maniss Jansons,
Bayerischen Rundfunk
Symphony Orchestra;
"Concerto N.2 pour
piano et orchestre
op.102" by Dmitri
Shostakovich – Vladimir
Kravinev (piano);
"Adagio" from
"Concerto pour Piano et
Orchestre No.23 K.488
en La Majeur" by
Wolfgang Amadeus
Mozart – Wilhelm
Kempff, le Bamberg
Symphony Orchestra;
"Clair de lune" by
Claude Debussy –
Florence Magri; "Il Pleut
sur la route" – Deprince
et son Orchestre; "The
Gadfly/Le Taon" by
Dmitri Shostakovich –
Orchestre Tsaikovsky;
"Moderato" from
"Concerto pour
Violoncelle et Orchestre
No.1 Op.107" by Dmitri
Shostakovich – Heinrich
Schiff, Bavarian Radio
Symphony Orchestra;
"Symphonie No. 27 in C
minor Op.85: Il Adagio"
by Nikolai Miaskovsky

Sound Recordist
Pierre Garnet
Sound Mixer
Jean-Pierre LaForce
Supervising Sound
Editor
Sylvain Malbrant
Script Historical
Consultant
Samuel Blumenfeld
Film Extracts
The Spoilers (1942)

Dolby Digital/DTS
In Colour
[1.85:1]
Subtitles

Distributor
Verve Pictures

9,462 ft +0 frames

French theatrical title
Une exécution
ordinaire

CAST

André Dussollier
Stalin
Marina Hands
Anna
Édouard Baer
Vassili
Denis Podalydès
concerte
Tom Novembre
hospital administrator
Grégory Gadebois
consultant

Gilles Gaston-Dreyfus
Béra
Anne Benoît
Alexandra
Marie Payen
patient
Amandine Dewasmes
patient
Régis Roméle
Doctor Gregoriev
Gilles Ségol
Uncle Anton
Vincent Ozanon
Horatiu Bob
militiamen
Denis Falgoux
Kremlin secretary
Agnieszka Kasprzak
nursing secretary
Fabienne Luchetti
administrator's
secretary
François Raffenaud
prison governor
Alain Stern
Molenkov
Valentin Popescu
Bolchakov
Sophie Pincemaille
Nathalie Bécue
guards
Miglen Mirtchev
Stéphane Alexandre
arresting police officers
Airy Routier
police officer in car
Thierry Hancisse
trades unionist
Marcel Horobet
cook
Jean-François Elberg
Professor Chomsky

Dolby Digital/DTS
In Colour
[1.85:1]
Subtitles

Distributor
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French theatrical title
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Dolby Digital/DTS
In Colour
[1.85:1]
Subtitles

Distributor
Verve Pictures

9,462 ft +0 frames

RED

USA 2010

Certificate 12A 110m 59s

CREDITS

Directed by
Robert Schwentke
Produced by
Lorenzo di Bonaventura
Mark Vahradian
Screenplay
Jon Hoeber
Erich Hoeber
Based on the graphic
novel by Warren Ellis,
Cully Hammer
Director of
Photography
Florian Ballhaus
Editor
Thom Noble
Production Designer
Alec Hammond
Music
Christophe Beck

©Summit
Entertainment, LLC
Production Companies
Summit Entertainment
presents a di
Bonaventura Pictures
production
A Robert Schwentke
film

Executive Producers
Gregory Noveck
Jake Myers
Co-producer
David Ready
Associate Producer
Misha Skoric
Unit Production
Managers
Whitney Brown
New Orleans Unit:
Edith LeBlanc
Production Supervisor
New Orleans Unit:
Marjorie Ergas
Production
Co-ordinators
Stefan Steen
2nd Unit:
Shelley A. Boylen
New Orleans Unit:
Jennifer Ray
New Orleans 2nd Unit:
Bernadette J. Gonzales
Production
Accountant
M. Ross Michaels
Location Managers
Marty Deiczak
New Orleans Unit:
David Ross McCarty
Post-production
Supervisor
Sara Romilly
2nd Unit Director
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Assistant Directors
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2nd Unit:
R. Emerson John
New Orleans 2nd Unit:
Sam Sullivan
Casting
Deborah Aquila

Tricia Wood
Canadian:
Robin Cook
New Orleans Unit:
Lisa Mae Fincannon
Directors of
Photography
2nd Unit:
David Herrington
New Orleans 2nd Unit:
Gary Capo
Camera Operators
A: Thomas Lappin
B: Tim Merkel
2nd Unit
A: Perry Hoffman
B: Mark Willis
New Orleans 2nd Unit
Michael Applebaum
Jerry M. Jacob
Jeff Tufano
Steadicam Operator
New Orleans Unit:
Andrew Rowlands
Gaffers
Franco Tata
2nd Unit:
Michael Hall
New Orleans Unit:
Andy Ryan
New Orleans 2nd Unit:
Michael B. McLaughlin
Key Grips
Rico Emerson
2nd Unit:
Michael O'Connor
New Orleans Unit:
Charlie Marroquin
New Orleans 2nd Unit:
Kenneth Coblenz
Visual Effects
Supervisor:
James Madigan
Producer:
Bernardo Jauregui
Visual Effects/Digital
Animation by
CIS Vancouver
Visual Effects by
Zorc Studios
Radium
Pixel Liberation Front
Saints LA
Key Special Effects
Marcus Rait
2nd Unit:
Mike Innanen
Special Effects
Co-ordinators
Laird McMurray
New Orleans Unit:
Jeff Brink
2nd Unit Special
Effects Supervisor
Rocco Larizza
Additional Editor
Matt Diezel

Executive Producers
Gregory Noveck
Jake Myers
Co-producer
David Ready
Associate Producer
Misha Skoric
Unit Production
Managers
Whitney Brown
New Orleans Unit:
Edith LeBlanc
Production Supervisor
New Orleans Unit:
Marjorie Ergas
Production
Co-ordinators
Stefan Steen
2nd Unit:
Shelley A. Boylen
New Orleans Unit:
Jennifer Ray
New Orleans 2nd Unit:
Bernadette J. Gonzales
Production
Accountant
M. Ross Michaels
Location Managers
Marty Deiczak
New Orleans Unit:
David Ross McCarty
Post-production
Supervisor
Sara Romilly
2nd Unit Director
Gary Capo
Assistant Directors
1st: Andrew Robinson
1st: Myron Hoffert
2nd: Grant Lucibello
2nd Unit
1st: Simon Board
2nd: Aric Dupere
New Orleans Unit
2nd: Steve Battaglia
New Orleans 2nd Unit
1st: Batou Chandler
2nd: Caroline O'Brien
2nd: Sherman Shelton
Script Supervisors
Susie Marucci
2nd Unit:
R. Emerson John
New Orleans 2nd Unit:
Sam Sullivan
Casting
Deborah Aquila

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Found guilty

Marcel Ophuls's film about Klaus Barbie poses profound moral questions about war and guilt, writes Nick James

Hotel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie

Marcel Ophuls; Germany/France 1988; Icarus Films/Region 1; 267 minutes; Aspect Ratio 4:3; Features: booklet

This remarkable audiovisual dossier is ostensibly a talking-heads marathon about the background to the trial of Klaus Barbie, the 'Butcher of Lyon'. As the head of the city's Gestapo from 1942-44, Barbie was responsible for many atrocities – including the torture and murder of resistance hero Jean Moulin – and yet he was allowed by the Allies to escape justice for 40 years until his extradition from Bolivia to France in 1983 and his trial in Lyon the following year. However, this gradual unpeeling of the layers of complicity that were wrapped like tissue paper around Barbie is merely the pretext for a deep intellectual delving into the moral unease that surrounds the most fundamental questions of personal guilt arising out of World War II.

I first saw 'Hotel Terminus' at the London Film Festival in the late 1980s. Then it seemed a contemporary work; now it's more like a time machine from an age when every person interviewed, no matter how much they had to hide or how mendacious they were, seems to feel a responsibility to the truth – even when they're lying. Watching it now, you realise that there really was once a world without spin. Ophuls can quiz a US State Department official or a former US intelligence officer and get either straight answers of utter candour or straight answers of utter cant. What you don't get are the bland locutions of cynical stonewalling and blindsiding that the most recent era of western adventurist politics has left as its legacy.

The film shows complete respect for the viewer's intelligence, plunging you straight in with a still image of Barbie and then a cut to one of his cordial German neighbours from Bolivia recalling with incredulity how Barbie (then renamed Altmann) got mad at any slur on the name of his long-dead Führer, and then another cut takes you to a billiard room in Lyon, where various patrons describe what Barbie's trial means to them. Over the next four hours and more, there's no spoon-feeding of context, you have to put the puzzle together yourself.

And what a puzzle. Barbie, to the several friends who never saw him in what we might call his professional context, was a kind, caring, jolly and affectionate friend or relative. Victims of his torture regime recall a small, calm man who would burst



Facing justice: 'Hotel Terminus: The Life and Times of Klaus Barbie'

into a vicious splenetic rage. In terms of subtle character analysis, the film's nearest literary achievement would be Gitta Sereny's 'Albert Speer: His Battle with Truth'. There is a cameo appearance from Claude Lanzmann, maker of the landmark Holocaust 1985 documentary 'Shoah'. And it's remarkable how many subjects of other films turn up – for instance, the slippery anti-colonialist lawyer Jacques Vergès, subject of Barbet Schroeder's 2007 documentary 'L'Avocat de la terreur', and Lucie Aubrac, the

No part of any film I've seen has stayed with me as indelibly as the final scenes

eponymous resistance-heroine subject of Claude Berri's 1997 drama. One man who escaped Barbie by pretending he didn't understand German was the linguist Michel Thomas. In this context these are the good guys. But Ophuls, an almost magical interlocutor, is seemingly sympathetic to every interviewee, no matter what their political persuasion. Yet he's also unafraid of asking the most pointed questions. He's no purist, though; he doesn't hesitate to help those on the brink of unthinking confession by offering the word they're grasping for. They're almost always grateful.

No part of any film I've seen has stayed with me quite as indelibly as the final scenes of this documentary, in which one of the very few children of the 44 from of the Izieu orphanage whom Barbie sent to

the death camps returns to the building from which she was snatched. I won't describe the sequence in detail, but the question it raises is what any one of us would have done had we been faced with the moral dilemmas rife in occupied and Vichy France. It's a more fundamental question for westerners now – in the midst of revelations about the behaviour of British and American servicemen in Iraq – than what one might have done had one been born in Germany at the wrong time (that cultural psychosis – so carefully imagined in Michael Haneke's 'The White Ribbon' – seems to have been too damningly powerful for almost anyone to escape). Any specific set of cultural circumstances is impossible to repeat, but the French circumstances produced complex responses to the threat of terror and intimidation that seem more 'human', and therefore more available to analogy.

As children, many of us who grew up in the post-war West fantasised about the war. Popular culture was full of the romanticised exploits of our parents' generation, from War Picture Library comics to Airfix kits of Spitfires and Messerschmitts, to war movies such as 'The Longest Day' (1962) and '633 Squadron' (1964). For myself, the heroic group that appealed the most in these schoolboy games – no doubt for trivial or romantic reasons – was the French Resistance.

In the immediate aftermath of the war the idea of the Resistance was crucial for French morale. However, Marcel Ophuls's landmark documentary 'The Sorrow and the Pity' (1969) – which makes a kind of diptych about the occupation in France with 'Hotel Terminus' – is one of the key documents that undermined the myth of a general French resistance. Most of the population were accepting of the status quo and the Resistance did not become a significant force until the Germans demanded forced French labour for its industries. Only then did droves of young men flee to the hills in search of protection and a cause.

In one moment in 'The Sorrow', Ophuls notes that it was people on the fringes of society, the loners and outcasts, who resisted from the start, not those with vested interests – an observation that should give any one of us pause to wonder how we ourselves would have behaved. By the end of 'The Sorrow and the Pity' we are only too aware of the accommodations that gave people's lives a sense of normality and convenience. In 'Hotel Terminus', Ophuls uses his extraordinary skills as, yes, an interrogator to build from the earlier film's platform of moral self-doubt and present us with a parcel of plutocrats in as many shades of sideways complicity with Barbie as can be imagined. "It was 40 years ago," is the constant refrain offered as a reason to forget. But fortunately this film is unforgettable.

NEW RELEASES

Animation Express

Canada 1984-2009; Image Entertainment (US)/National Film Board of Canada (Canada); Region-free Blu-ray/NTSC DVD; 221 minutes (DVD)/333 minutes (Blu-ray); Features: onscreen notes

Films: Following the near-collapse of the great animation studios of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union in the early 1990s, and Channel 4's scaling-down of its support for the medium not long after, Canada remains one of the few countries that continue to subsidise animation as a vehicle for personal expression. This compilation of recent National Film Board work (aside from Ishu Patel's *Paradise*, everything dates from 2004-09) showcases its range: with 26 titles on the DVD and 39 on the Blu-ray, it's an initially bewildering cornucopia of styles, subjects and techniques.

Highlights include Chris Lavis and Maciek Szczerbowski's eerie stop-motion *Madame Tutli-Putli* (already anthologised on Cinema 16's *World Short Films* but doubly effective in high-definition), Cordell Barker's maniacally inventive *Runaway*, Claude Barras's Tim Burtonesque gothic fantasy *Sainte Barbe*, Nicolas Brault's silhouetted (but strikingly un-Reiniger-like) African folktale *Hungu*, Claude Cloutier's delightfully subversive *Sleeping Betty*, Iriz Pääbo's *Ha'aki*, a near-abstract paean to Canadian hockey, and Janet Perlman's affectionate tribute to 1950s sci-fi *Invasion of the Space Lobsters*. They don't all work as well (the parodic *Pimp My Boat* overstays its welcome beyond its initial joke, while the ambitious but tonally uneven *Ryan* was handicapped by the death of its subject, animator Ryan Larkin, during production) but the quality threshold is gratifyingly high. **Disc:** The transfers are mostly state-of-the-art, the vast majority presented in native high-definition on the Blu-ray and benefiting enormously from the additional detail. The menus offer multiple points of access (title, theme, director). Each film also gets a brief onscreen programme note, though it would have been more convenient had these been supplied in printed form. (MB)

Chaplin at Keystone

Charles Chaplin, Henry Lehrman, Mack Sennett, Mabel Normand et al; US 1914; BFI/Region 2; Certificate U; 561 minutes; Aspect Ratio 1.33:1; Features: 1916 homage to Chaplin, documentary, tour of Keystone locations, stills gallery, booklet

Films: Not many of us would still hold Chaplin up as the greatest filmmaker ever, as critics commonly once did. (At the Brussels World Fair in 1958, he was tallied up by more than a hundred historians as Number One, with almost double the votes of the runner-up – Eisenstein.) Like several 'classic' figures, Chaplin got decades of due for establishing an entire cultural paradigm, but then faded from our thoughts as subtler contemporaries and successors (in this case Keaton) gained attention and stole his long-term thunder. It seems unarguable that by



D'Artagnan's Daughter Tavernier's handsome Dumas sequel bears traces of his favoured themes. The pains of mortality and paternity intrude reliably

this date Keaton ages gracefully and with agile invention, while Chaplin remains the iconic but sentimental artefact of both the silent era and the first mid-century years of film-culture cinephilia. But that's by one measure, a measure that supposes all cinema exists at once to the exclusion of a vitally important parameter: history. Chaplin is in the DNA of virtually every line of high and low culture that exists on the globe, and if cinema is to a large degree about remembrance and human time and timelessness, then the history that Chaplin helped make and helped make permanent should be as crucial to us as the thrill of the present-day blockbuster – which will in turn become a captured yesterday sooner or later.

Thus, the new BFI box is essential, as it captures in your fist the entirety of Chaplin's seminal year of 1914, from his very first film appearance to his established status as a comedy star. Thirty-five of the 36 films Chaplin made that year are here, including a fragment of *A Thief Catcher* and excluding the one lost entry in the filmography, *Her Friend the Bandit*. The passage is truly epochal, launching from his debut in *Making a Living* (as a dishevelled non-Tramp fop embroiled in a brawling hotel-room scandal) to his first feature, *Tillie's Punctured Romance*, the entire industry's first slapstick feature. It's like watching a common memory born: in *Kid Auto Races at Venice*, Cal, Chaplin introduces his Tramp, improvising as a camera-hog vagrant amid a real crowd of race fans (most of whom

don't know at first what to make of him). Modern man's most totemic figure next to Christ thus installed, Chaplin didn't rely on the character completely at Keystone – many of the one- and two-reelers have him tripping through tumbledown comedy plots as a drunken aristocrat or a 'Dutch' dandy or even, in *The Masquerader*, a version of himself, flubbing his Tramp role in a film-within-a-film and sneaking his way back into the studio dressed as a woman. In short, an essential set and a thorough education for any moviehead.

Discs: The films' restorations are all as careful and lovely as age and damage will allow, and Jeffrey Vance's 56-page



'Tillie's Punctured Romance'

booklet, complete with teeming production trivia on every short, including the exact day each was filmed and released, is indispensable. The set was produced in an international collaboration between the BFI, Lobster Films in France, the Cineteca Bologna and the UCLA, and is also available from Flicker Alley in the US. (MA)

D'Artagnan's Daughter

Bertrand Tavernier; France 1994; Second Sight/Region 2; Certificate 15; 125 minutes; Aspect Ratio 1.85:1

Film: Though superficially a comic, swordplay-packed homage to the swashbuckling classics of Tavernier's youth (not to mention the grizzled one-last-quest of Ford's *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*), this handsomely mounted Dumas sequel, in which the energetic Sophie Marceau enlists the help of her father's ageing musketeers to foil a plot against the young Louis XIV, bears visible traces of the director's favoured themes. The pains of mortality and paternity intrude reliably, humorously disguised as Philippe Noiret's exasperation at his aching bones and headstrong, long-unseen child (like a comic riposte to the dark doings of *The Passion of Beatrice*). It's an enjoyable and ambitious if uneven mix of farce, historical drama and action adventure, though the ambling talky interludes of D'Artagnan's nostalgic cohort slow the pace of the narrative somewhat. The extended swordplay scenes delight with their emphasis on skill over athleticism, even when the panto villainy lumbers, in the code-cracking comedy of Gigi Proietti's silky Cardinal Mazarin, possibly the only screen baddie to attempt a gag about the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

Disc: A nifty transfer, as befits cinematographer Patrick Blossier's ravishing torch-lit chateaux and galloping chevaux, but a barebones release. (KS) (S&S July 1995)

The Ghost

Riccardo Freda; Italy 1963; Artus Films/Region 2; 91 minutes; Aspect Ratio 1.66:1; Features: 'Riccardo Freda and the Fantastique' by Alain Petit

Film: Riccardo Freda (1909-1999) is undoubtedly held in the highest regard by French fans of the *fantastique*. Though he mostly relished making sword-and-sandal epics, as well as thrillers and westerns, Freda effectively kickstarted the Italian exploration of gothic horror in 1956 with *I vampiri* (now mostly credited to his protégé Mario Bava). In 1962 he returned to the genre with *Raptus*, or *The Horrible Secret of Doctor Hichcock* (the 't' was dropped to avoid any lawsuits from the rotund master of suspense). Made in 16 days to win Freda a bet for a horse he coveted, this lurid hymn to necrophilia (still unavailable in a quality DVD edition) starred the extraordinary feline British actress Barbara Steele, who had "the eyes of a Chirico painting" said the director.

Made the following year, *The Ghost*, or *Lo spettro*, was titled *Le Spectre du*

NEW RELEASES

← *Professeur Hitchcock* in France, erroneously implying some kind of sequel. Crippled Professor Hitchcock is averting death by a special treatment administered by Dr Livingstone, the secret lover of the sick man's alluring wife Margaret (Steele again). When the conniving pair bump off the professor to obtain a substantial inheritance, the 'dead' man spookily keeps reappearing. Freda piles on the plot twists and gothic thrills with a keen eye and atmospheric photography, and is mercifully more restrained with the zoom lens than most of his Italian contemporaries. **Disc:** This French edition is superior to the US alternative, even if there is little detail in the darkness that shrouds the film. The English soundtrack is available without French subtitles, though the bonus is in French only. (DT)

Grindhouse – 2-Disc Collector's Edition (Blu-ray)

Planet Terror/Death Proof

Robert Rodriguez/Quentin Tarantino; US 2007; Momentum Pictures/Region B Blu-ray; Certificate 18; 88/86 minutes (plus 312 minutes of features); Aspect Ratio 16:9; Features: 'Planet Terror' commentary by Robert Rodriguez, audience reactions track, faux trailers (for 'Werewolf Women of the SS', 'Thanksgiving', 'Don't', 'Machete', 'Hobo

with a Shotgun'), commentaries by trailer directors Eli Roth, Rob Zombie and Edgar Wright, trailer making-of featurettes/storyboards/stills galleries, 'Don't' poster with extended score by David Arnold, Robert Rodriguez's 'Ten Minute Cooking School', Robert Rodriguez's 'Ten Minute Film School', Quentin Tarantino and Robert Rodriguez 'New York Times' interview, production featurettes, poster galleries, Comic Con 2006 featuring directors and cast of 'Grindhouse', uncut version of 'Baby It's You' performed by Mary Elizabeth Winstead, introducing Zoe Bell, 'Double Dare' trailer, 'Death Proof' extended music

Film: Fixing Momentum's lavish rerelease of the original version of Rodriguez and Tarantino's faux-exploitation double-bill with a gimlet eye, there's no doubt that this home-cinema simulacrum of their 'recreate the grindhouse' experience should be the definitive edition. Wedged back-to-back and garnished with playfully parodic trailers (Rob Zombie's exuberant *Werewolf Women of the SS* is the standout in a strong field), Rodriguez's gore-fest and Tarantino's jaw-fest regain the enjoyably cramped, quick and dirty feel the extended standalone releases don't deliver.

Planet Terror, Rodriguez's relentlessly high-energy homage to *Night of the Living Dead*, where survivors of a



Cherry bomb: 'Grindhouse'

mutant-gas attack battle their afflicted opponents with blackly humorous ingenuity, still gives up its pleasures more easily than its partner, on subsequent viewings. Who wouldn't cheer the splatter-drenched BBQ siege, or the magnificent final assault of Cherry Darling's deadly leg? But Tarantino's talky, two-pronged speed-and-slasher movie *Death Proof*, in which loquacious girl party-posses are menaced by Kurt Russell's crash-fetishist Stuntman Mike, looks better with a few miles on the clock. Its barroom tensions and back-road revenge radiate a menace that's obscured by the pop-culture gabbing first time around.

This groaning package also engenders a second, odder variety of reassessment, since its four hours and more of extras provide you with a dense production overlay for every significant scene. No stone of shooting detail, directorial discussion or on-set jape is left unturned, and Rodriguez in particular provides an educational welter of on-set videos revealing the special effects and stunts of his set pieces. Informative though meaty explanations of *Death Proofs* old-school stunts and *Planet Terror's* baroque mutant makeup are, by the time you've reached the audience reaction track, the making-ofs devoted to the trailers, and Rodriguez's guide to preparation of Texas BBQ ribs, you're feasting on a banquet of crumbs. Rather than the fanboy fodder of Rodriguez and Tarantino repeating anecdotes in layer after layer of interviews, an authoritative documentary on the grindhouse genre would have been a useful counterweight to the jokey fluff that pads out the package.

Discs: Ah, the irony of using a high-definition format to showcase a deliberately distressed film duo, though under the flamboyant jumps and scratches the movies' colours pop from the transfer in a satisfyingly lurid and historically accurate fashion. Not to mention the added irony of providing a vast package of extras but making the retro-styled menu pop-ups a fiddly nightmare to navigate. (KS)

Heimat Fragments: The Women

Edgar Reitz; Germany 2006; Second Sight/Region 2; Certificate 12; 146 minutes; Aspect Ratio 16:9 anamorphic

Film: Hermann Simon's daughter Lulu looks back on her life and those of her female ancestors, relatives and the women of the Hunsrück village of Schabbach. If these names mean nothing, you'll probably find Edgar Reitz's fourth *Heimat* film borderline baffling, as this complex, layered montage gains much of its resonance by forging links with events in the earlier films – though most of the footage is effectively new, being sourced from eight hours' worth of deleted scenes. Whereas the events of the earlier films were consciously set against particular historical epochs, these are barely touched on here, as Reitz's emphasis is now on more universal concerns, especially the nature of memory and how it's preserved in the mind, family folklore, locations, objects and film archives. Reitz has always made great play with the textural differences between film stocks, and this continues here with Lulu's scenes being shot on high-definition digital video, whose patina-free sharpness emphasises the here and now. Complaints that the end result tends towards bittiness (scenes rarely get more than a few minutes to develop) are pre-addressed by the title. **Disc:** Some of the older footage occasionally shows its age, but the transfer is otherwise fine. (MB)

Last Train Home

Lixin Fan; Canada/China/UK 2009; Dogwoof/Region 2; Certificate E; 85 minutes; Aspect Ratio 16:9; Features: trailer

Film: Lixin Fan's moving, watchful and stoically melancholy documentary plucks one family from China's tide of 130 million migrant workers who travel home to their distant villages only at Chinese New Year. The human cost of rural depopulation and rapid industrialisation is vividly conveyed by the two-year struggle between the Zhang parents, who left their children to be raised in rural Sichuan Province

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16 years ago while they work in a Guangzhou clothing factory, and their resentful teenage daughter Qin. Fan's camera shadows his reticent subjects doggedly but invisibly, eschewing narration and building such a careful, patient picture of the family stresses ("Why are you only fifth in class?" is the mother's greeting to the small son she hardly knows) that an unexpected argument feels like a grenade going off. His breathtaking compositions of the Zhangs' long journeys and the undulating fields of Qin's village recall Chang Yung's eloquent landscapes in *Up the Yangtze* (2007), on which Fan was associate producer. But the swelling sea of migrants depicted stranded at a station, and the halting, uneasy exchanges between parent and alienated child show an ability to convey huge social upheavals in microcosm in a way that's all his own. **Disc:** A good-looking transfer that accommodates the night fluorescence of city sweatshops and the vibrant green of rice paddies. It's wearing nothing but a trailer, but it needs nothing more. (KS)

The Magician

Ingmar Bergman; Sweden 1958; Criterion/Region 1 NTSC; 101 minutes; Aspect Ratio 1.33:1; Features: visual essay by Peter Cowie, interviews with Bergman, booklet with pieces by Olivier Assayas and Geoff Andrew and an excerpt from Bergman's autobiography

Film: One of the less beloved wonder cabinets in the Bergman oeuvre, this odd gothic puzzle might actually be one of the great Swede's most confessional works, despite its roiling mix of saucy period farce, class critique, metaphysical horror and modernist unease. Really a chamber piece in which an even dozen characters, divided into three class teams (aristocratic/bureaucratic, servant, interloper/vagabond), face off in a blandly opulent 19th-century townhouse. The invaders are a small company of travelling mesmerists-cum-charlatans, led by the mute Dr Vogler (Max von Sydow) and his assistant Aman (Ingrid Thulin), who from the outset are obviously not what they seem. What exactly they are is the evasive artichoke heart of the movie, as the troupe are confronted by the town's pompous local authorities (Erland Josephson, Gunnar Björnstrand etc), humiliated and forced to demonstrate either the validity of their thaumaturgic claims or their harmlessness as barnstorming performers, with either conclusion being their salvation or doom. What happens is devilishly impossible to quantify as either baloney or magic, but both sides of the science-versus-'art' struggle seem to win and lose, in turn.

The post-Enlightenment debate is also, incidentally, the Bergman kernel Woody Allen stole for *A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy* (1982). Though it's been easy to enjoy or dismiss *The Magician* (the original title, *Ansiktet*, translates as 'The Face') as merely a case of Bergmanesque enigma-philis, in reality the film is a parable, like so

Drive-in gothic

Kim Newman on the bizarre charms of three surreal, psychedelic 1960s Edgar Allan Poe adaptations

Spirits of the Dead

Federico Fellini/Louis Malle/Roger Vadim; UK/France/Italy 1968; Arrow Films/Region ABC Blu-ray/Region 2 DVD; Certificate 18; 121 minutes; Aspect Ratio 1.85:1; Features: rare Vincent Price voiceover narration used for the US theatrical version; 60-page booklet featuring Poe's original stories, essays by Tim Lucas and Peter Bondanella

Edgar Allan Poe was neglected in America during his lifetime and for a few decades after his death, but his reputation grew in Europe where, it has to be said, his admirers couldn't have had the disillusioning misfortune of actually meeting the notoriously self-destructive, hostile writer. In the 1960s, Poe was unexpectedly a box-office draw thanks to Roger Corman's run of Vincent Price vehicles based on his best-known stories, and so he was a natural for one of those multi-country, multi-auteur portmanteau pictures that were also in vogue. Oddly, in America, 'Spirits of the Dead' – aka 'Histoires extraordinaires' or 'Tales of Mystery and Imagination' – was augmented slightly (with an introductory Vincent Price voiceover) and distributed by AIP, the company behind the Corman films – where it must have puzzled the drive-in crowds with its bizarre, fetishist, surreal and psychedelic approach to the gothic.

The conventional wisdom about the film is that it's worth seeing only for the final story, Federico Fellini's 'Toby Dammit' (based on a Poe joke called 'Never Bet the Devil Your Head') with Terence Stamp marvellous as a dissolute English actor cracking up in Rome while preparing to make a 'Catholic spaghetti western' and rushing towards doom and the Devil (a creepy little girl) in a rust-brown Ferrari. It is the most sustained, disorienting and memorable



Pop-art fantasy: Jane Fonda (left) as Contessa Frederique in Roger Vadim's 'Metzengerstein'

of the episodes, but the other two segments are interesting too.

Roger Vadim's 'Metzengerstein' is often dismissed for silliness, and does boast odd moments such as Jane Fonda shrieking "ooog" (she's saying 'Hugues' with a French accent) – but it should be remembered that Poe wasn't being serious in this mock-gothic tale (written just before he embarked on a series of psychological horrors to prove that terror "was of the soul... not Germany") and so Vadim can scarcely be faulted for having a perverse lark with it. Fonda plays a depraved aristocrat ("When I find the wretch who has set this trap, he's going to get two hours' whipping and vinegar on his wounds... I'll pour it myself") who becomes obsessed with her gentler cousin (in a casting coup, Peter Fonda) and haunted by a

spectral horse. The medieval setting is a pop-art fantasy which allows the star to parade in a succession of proto-Barbarella outfits and play a melodrama villain with a hint of sensitivity.

Louis Malle's take on 'William Wilson', one of Poe's best stories and surprisingly rarely filmed, is the most faithful of these three to Poe's text – though, like Vadim, Malle changes the sex of a key character, here to allow a part for Brigitte Bardot as a dark, cigar-smoking cardswoman – and uses a credible, if equally well-designed and well-costumed historical setting. Alain Delon plays Wilson, a cruel reprobate stalked by his virtuous double, and Malle gets under the skin of Poe's self-analytical tale of the compulsion to be evil even as a man cannot live without his better self. A floppy dummy taking a fall from a great height hurts the film, but Delon's icy performance lends the anthology its only touch of genuine horror.

Arrow's Blu-ray offers a variety of audio and subtitle options – the film was shot in several languages, and the episodes mix them from scene to scene (Jane Fonda's lip-movements show she spoke French or English alternately, depending on who was playing the scene with her; Fellini makes a joke of this by having characters claim not to speak Italian or English in Italian or English) – and Price voiceover extracts from the American cut (though this is the longer European version). A booklet usefully contains the three original stories and reprints of articles by Tim Lucas and Peter Bondanella along with a wealth of lobby cards and posters.



Touché: Alain Delon as William Wilson in 'Spirits of the Dead'

Talkin' about Harry

Harry Nilsson is remembered more for his misadventures than for his music. Tim Lucas puts the record straight

Who Is Harry Nilsson (and Why Is Everybody Talkin' about Him?)

John Scheinfeld; US 2006-10; Lorber Films; 117 minutes; Aspect Ratio 4:3; Features: trailer, 'Loneliness' video with Yoko Ono introduction, 97 minutes' additional interviews and deleted scenes

In the years since his death in 1994 at the age of 52, the memory of singer-songwriter Harry Nilsson has become more synonymous with his penchant for misadventure than for anything he recorded. His musical legacy is tethered to no particular trend, so it hasn't enjoyed a nostalgic revival like punk or disco; however, it is timeless, and at the same time too particular to the artist to become standard. Therefore, this once Grammy-winning, chart-topping artist has mellowed to the point of sharing, among music lovers, a modest shelf with other treasured (and troubled) cult figures such as Scott Walker and Alexander 'Skip' Spence. Meanwhile, the general public remember Nilsson, if at all, as a coked-up train wreck, the bloated tour guide of John Lennon's infamous 1973 'lost weekend' in Los Angeles, the man whose London apartment played host (through no fault of its owner) to the deaths of both Mama Cass Elliot and Keith Moon.

It's an ironic afterlife for a musician who, as this outstanding documentary (first screened in 2006) reminds us, was one of the top songwriters of his generation – The Monkees' 'Cuddly Toy' and Three Dog Night's 'One (Is the Loneliest Number)' were his – and one of the very few tunesmiths who could sing his own work better than any other pretender. As more than one witness here remarks, Nilsson was arguably the finest male singing voice of his generation, blessed with choirboy soul and a range that could raise gooseflesh, the hair on your head, whatever you've got. But his story was always ironic; it was not lost on him, for example, that his greatest success was with two songs he didn't write: Badfinger's 'Without You' and Fred Neil's 'Everybody's Talkin' – the theme from 'Midnight Cowboy' (1969).

John Scheinfeld's film tells a bitterly tragic story laced with a lot of magic and rollicking laughter. It begins (in ingeniously animated still photo montages timed to Nilsson's autobiographical song '1941') with young Harry's father abandoning him and his mother when he was three. Decades later, the other shoe drops when Harry walks out on his own family after his first wife has given birth to his son Zak. (Harry's closest friends recall that



Man behind the music: 'Who Is Harry Nilsson (and Why Is Everybody Talkin' about Him?)'

he spoke very little about his heartbreaks, but the extensive musical clips show that he vented himself fully in his music.) As it happens, Zak was also the name of Ringo Starr's first born, and it was John Lennon (himself abandoned by a father) and Ringo (likewise a morose child) who later befriended Harry, his compensatory daydream of finding a new family by being welcomed as the fifth Beatle actually coming near enough true.

Nilsson's openhearted, self-exploratory, melancholic songwriting became perhaps the single greatest post-'Pepper' musical influence on Lennon, and Ringo became Harry's best friend, the best man at his third and final wedding and godfather to his children – but even the Beatles proved an insufficient Band-Aid for Harry's heartache. The self-destructive streak that fuelled such lunacy as the week-long binges described here by Jimmy Webb, Terry Gilliam and a surprisingly coy Robin Williams also had a fatal professional echo when Nilsson followed the 1971 Grammy-sweeping album 'Nilsson Schmilsson' by firing producer Richard Perry and stomping his way through a much-too-quick follow-up, 'Son of Schmilsson', notorious for its eccentric odes to groupies, old age, death and bed-wetting, not to mention 'You're Breaking My Heart' ("You're tearin' it apart/So fuck you"). With suicidal precision, it killed the momentum of his hit record, and began his descent into a maelstrom that only ended with his serendipitous 1976 meeting with Una, the Irish bakery worker who became his third and final wife, with whom he had six children, and the 1980 assassination

He was blessed with choirboy soul and a range that could raise gooseflesh, the hair on your head, whatever you've got

of John Lennon, which prompted him to become an anti-gun activist.

What works so well about this documentary is that it allows the subject to speak for himself, not only through the use of autobiographical tapes contributed by the family, but through the generous musical underscoring of facts and the sheer accumulation of non-judgemental witnessing. Nearly everyone spoken to (including the Smothers Brothers, still smarting from the night Harry and John heckled their important comeback concert at the Troubadour) is conflicted in their assessment of the subject: he is variously called a genius, a brute, overwhelmingly generous, ungrateful, a saint, a sinner, a family man of many broken families. When it's all over, it's left to the viewer to sift through the evidence and reach a conclusion, which ultimately is less dependent on anyone's words than on the joy shining from the faces of all who remember him. It is the ones who most aggravate us, who get deepest under our skin, who get to us most, and Harry Nilsson was plainly one of those.

Feeling just the right length at 117 minutes, the feature is supplemented by a wealth of additional segments which convey a narrative curve of their own. The lack of a 'play all' option is regrettable but each of these little topical islands achieves a depth the feature can't afford to indulge. For example, in the feature, one can't help but be impressed by Harry's widow Una, one of those women who attain radiance in middle age, and by three of their children who are also interviewed, all attractive, well spoken, poised and insightful; they collectively provide the feature with the happy ending Harry's lonesome story so desperately needs. However, the deeper dose of home and hearth we receive in the supplements is enough to make us feel, on Harry's behalf, how leaving these loved ones behind, when the tab was finally due for a lonely life misspent, must have been its own worst circle of hell.

many of Bergman's (even *Persona*), a shadow-show examining the nettlesome, complex relationship between the artist-filmmaker and the public. Every step through Bergman's narrative falls on shaky textual ground – tricks are plumbed but disturb, false identities are exposed but preferred to reality, hypnotic suggestions vent authentic secrets but also manufacture outright illusions, 'magic' affects 'reality' and vice versa. "Nothing is true," someone says, which is as applicable a cinematic axiom as any, and yet here the filmmaker's role is to be misunderstood, scorned, asked for simplicities he cannot deliver. Bergman's film, which seems so campy and forthright on the surface, is a carefully calibrated morality play warning us not to confuse art, truth, science and metaphysics, although we are to understand that, since all four are man-made concepts, we're prone to mistaking one for the others. Staged and filmed with the master's customary mid-century deftness and mood, *The Magician* is a major work for its elliptical symbology alone; there may not be a more confounding film about art anywhere. **Disc:** Typically Criterion-perfect, oozing with high-contrast dazzle and buttressed by extras that demonstrate how much fun this film is for critics – Peter Cowie's narrated essay calls it "an act of revenge" by Bergman on his audience, and draws attention to the director's use of recurring surnames (Vogler, Vergerus, etc) and Christ imagery throughout, prophesying as it does the Von Sydow-starring *Greatest Story Ever Told* made seven years later. Which all by itself lends the Christ myth a new mask: the socially persecuted artist. (MA) (MFB 310)

Metropolis

Fritz Lang; Germany 1927; Eureka/Masters of Cinema/Region B Blu-ray/Region 2 NTSC DVD; Certificate PG; 150 minutes; Aspect Ratio 1.33:1; Features: commentary, documentary, booklet

Film: The most important cinematic resurrection of the 21st century thus far, this is the first time since 1927 that something approximating the full version of Fritz Lang's sci-fi masterpiece has been made publicly available after multiple attempts at reconstruction over the intervening decades (the most notorious being the colourised Giorgio Moroder disco-pop version, for many years the easiest to find). Following the now well-documented discovery of a poor-quality 16mm negative of Lang's own cut in Buenos Aires in 2008, these are rendered redundant – and short of higher-quality material subsequently coming to light (vanishingly unlikely, given that all the recent publicity failed to turn anything up), this will remain the definitive edition.

Disc: Eureka's Masters of Cinema offshoot clearly considers this a flagship title, and has accordingly given it the deluxe treatment. Visually, this is by far the best domestic presentation of *Metropolis* to date (especially on the Blu-ray, though the DVD is no slouch either), with the familiar material

looking almost pristine. Even the badly scratched, stained and cropped Argentinian footage proves surprisingly watchable, having been extensively retouched and reframed so that all shots match up correctly. Gottfried Huppertz's score (composed for the premiere) is more Wagnerian than modernist but a perfect fit. The story of the film, its restoration history and its influence on everyone from Ridley Scott to David Fincher (via Madonna's 'Express Yourself' video) is covered by an absorbing 55-minute documentary. All the above is also included on Kino's parallel Region A Blu-ray/NTSC DVD release, but the Eureka disc throws in a lively, detail-packed commentary by David Kalat and Jonathan Rosenbaum which blends production anecdotes with critical analysis, and a 56-page booklet including, amongst much else, Luis Buñuel's original review. (MB)

Mickey One

Arthur Penn; US 1965; Sony Classics/Region 1 NTSC; 93 minutes; Aspect Ratio 1.85:1; Features: trailer

Film: The *nouvelle vague* influences in *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) are well known, and usually attributed to screenwriters Robert Benton and David Newman. But if anything, this rarely seen earlier curio from the late Arthur Penn and star Warren Beatty has a more pronounced Godardian influence – alongside a big dose of Orson Welles' *The Trial* (1962).

In a quirky piece of casting, Beatty is a stand-up comic on the run from mob debts – though it's never entirely clear how he racked these up. Hopping the rails to Chicago, he assumes the identity of a Polish hobo ('Mickey One' is the short version), but he's lured back into the nightclubs, a moth to the spotlight. In the film's climax, he auditions before an empty room and an unseen booking agent who may be about to kill him – or so Mickey imagines. The mood is mock-noir, with Beatty's narration and saxy improvisations from Stan Getz on the soundtrack, and Penn putting his camera under the noses of a ravaged-looking Franchot Tone, erstwhile Dorian Gray Hurd Hatfield and the dazzlingly handsome Beatty. (DP Ghislain Cloquet fitted the film in between *Le Feu follet* and *Au hasard Balthazar*.) The staccato editing is too clever by half, and the upfront symbolism (including a mute Fujiwara Kamatari as 'the Artist') isn't subtle, but that's part of the fascination of this genuinely eccentric endeavour.

Disc: Released to DVD-R on the Sony Classics imprint, *Mickey One* looks exceptionally good. Order through Sony's website or other online retailers. (TC) (MFB 390)

Night of the Demon

Jacques Tourneur; UK 1957; Encore Entertainment/Region 2; Certificate PG; 92 minutes (UK cut)/78 minutes (US cut); Aspect Ratio 1.66:1 anamorphic; Features: British/US versions, stills gallery, booklet

Film: One of the most viscerally effective of all occult horror films. It says much for Jacques Tourneur's control of his



Metropolis The restored full version of Fritz Lang's sci-fi masterpiece is the most important cinematic resurrection of the 21st century thus far

material that the film survives such initial drawbacks as an opening scene featuring a distinctly rubbery monster (notoriously imposed by producer Hal Chester against Tourneur's advice) and Niall MacGinnis visually designating himself a likely agent of Satan thanks to the kind of facial adornment about which Groucho Marx once quipped, "Don't point that beard at me, it might go off!" But once it gets going, *Night of the Demon* grips like the hold a surreptitiously transferred runic parchment has over its intended victims, as Dana Andrews's sceptical rationalist finds that science has its limits when demonic forces genuinely seem to be at large. The film constantly catches the viewer off guard, not least when two participants in a séance burst into a bizarre duet of 'Cherry Ripe' to make visiting spirits feel welcome. **Disc:** Commendably, both the British and truncated American (*Curse of the Demon*) cuts are included, and the transfers of each are fine. A stills gallery is the only on-disc extra, but an excellent 24-page booklet includes a huge amount of contextual material and concludes with a scholarly two-page bibliography. (MB) (MFB 288)

Paths of Glory

Stanley Kubrick; US 1957; Criterion/Region 1 NTSC; 88 minutes; Aspect Ratio 1.66:1; Features: critic's audio commentary, audio interview with Kubrick, new interviews with producers, French TV segment about WWI incident, booklet, theatrical trailer

Film: The most famous films of Stanley Kubrick – from 2001 to *Eyes Wide Shut* – can feel, spectacularly, as though they're made from the troubled sleep of a compacted genius living alone at

the top of the world. But Kubrick's earlier works have an energy and clarity he exchanged for his famous and unique high-concept immersiveness, and it's hard to look newly upon, for instance, *Paths of Glory* – all bare-knuckle, closed-fisted 88 minutes of it – and not think that maybe something was lost while we floated in the weird oceans of imagery Kubrick created in his last three decades.

In any context, *Paths* remains the definitive WWI-set anti-war scorch, much copied but never equalled, thanks largely to the bullet-train story cascade (streamlined from Humphrey Cobb's book by Kubrick, Calder Willingham and pulp punk Jim Thompson) and Kubrick's relentlessly ultra-real, disarmingly composed images. (Really, WWI's trench-riven wastelands may be the most inherently cinematic – the most visually potent and nightmarish – war-torn landscape ever created, as suggested by scores of unforgettable sequences from *The Big Parade* to *A Very Long Engagement*.) A command to take an impossible hill, a slaughter, an officer's corrupt outrage, and a military trial for a handful of randomly chosen scapegoat 'cowards' to pay the price of the mission's failure – the story is both modest and universal, and the film carries no fat. Kirk Douglas, as the

ethical centre who can't prevent the lunacy from winding tight around him, is so pressurised by rage and guilt you can see his rivets popping, and it may be the least grandiose, and most moving, performance of his still underrated career.

Anti-war films sometimes make the mistake of characterising armed conflict as just a generalised madness, and not the product of individuals' amorality, ambition and greed. Not Kubrick's – in *Paths*, blame is placed with the career militarists, and politics and the ethics applied to war, which we often suppose complement each other, clash and chew innocent men up like hamburger. Beautifully utilising the same sickeningly ornate German palace that framed *Last Year in Marienbad* four years later, Kubrick's film is in your face, from the mesmerising mid-battle no-man's-land tracking shots to Douglas's powder-keg muscularity to Timothy Carey's slobbering idiocy as one of the chosen executioners.

Discs: The new transfer virtually climbs into your lap, with vintage interviews and commentaries that only add a smidgen of insight to an already lean machine – although it's easy to love producer James B. Harris's story of Carey's mid-production self-kidnapping and subsequent sacking. (MA) (MFB 289)

A Room and a Half

Andrei Khrzhanovsky; Russia 2009; Yume Pictures/Region 2; Certificate 12; 130 minutes; Aspect Ratio 16:9; Features: trailer, director interview, onstage Q&A, printed essay, BBC radio interview

Film: The path from animation to live action can be perilous, as can condensing a major artist's life and work into two hours, but Andrei Khrzhanovsky's belated feature debut (he was 69 at its premiere) is one of the most conceptually imaginative biopics in years, drawing and meriting comparisons with Andrei Tarkovsky's *Mirror* (1975) and Yuri Norstein's *Tale of Tales* (1979), Russia's greatest film memory-maps.

Khrzhanovsky delves deep into the writings and reminiscences of Nobel laureate Joseph Brodsky, turning them into dramatised reconstructions and superbly animated vignettes, most memorably when the instruments of an entire orchestra glide serenely over (and away from) his home city of Leningrad. Even the sea-crossing framing device is less hoary than it seems, as the real Brodsky died in American exile without ever making the return trip.

Disc: A pleasant surprise from this variable label, with a superb transfer augmented by copious extras including an interview with Khrzhanovsky, a post-screening Q&A with the director and female lead Alisa Freindlikh (hosted by *S&S* contributor Ian Christie) and a short printed essay. Two small niggles: the BBC radio interview with

Khrzhanovsky and Freindlikh is in untranslated Russian, and the subtitles inexplicably disappear from the main feature for several lines at around the 40-minute mark. (MB) (S&S June 2010)

Portrait of the artist: 'A Room and a Half'



Colditz

Universal/BBC; UK 1972-74; 2 entertain/Region 2; Certificate 12; 1,460 minutes; Aspect Ratio 4:3; Features: 'Six from Colditz' interview, booklet

Programme: John Mills, that bastion of war-movie integrity, played Major Pat Reid in Guy Hamilton's biopic *The Colditz Story* (1955), recounting in breezy fashion the British officer's captivity at Oflag IVc from 1940 up to his eventual escape two years later, all in under a hundred minutes. The television version expands on Reid's personal story to provide a wartime history of the POW castle and proves highly persuasive even though characters and events are all fictionalised, with Edward Hardwicke now playing one 'Pat Grant'. The increased level of detail is such that the opening instalments are devoted just to introducing each of the main characters pre-capture, with Jack Hedley's commanding officer, equivalent to the role originally played by Eric Portman, making a particularly strong impression. The grinding pace ably serves episodes on a slow boil, such as the detailed two-part recreation of Reid's eventual escape and the celebrated episode, spread over several months, in which a prisoner fakes mental illness as a ploy to get home. At other times the leisurely tempo really takes some getting used to, as does the phoney courtyard set.

Discs: Both film and tape elements have been treated extremely well for this debut home-video release. Disappointingly, the only supplement, other than a booklet, is a brief 1973 interview with Reid. (SA)

Eden of the East

Production I.G./Eden of the East Production Committee; Japan 2009; Manga Entertainment/Region 2; Certificate 15; 237 minutes; Aspect Ratio 1.78:1; Features: conversations between staff and actors, promotion, TV spot

Programme: This four-hour TV miniseries is one of the best Japanese animations of recent years, and one of the most accessible for anyone new to 'adult' anime. (*Eden* has only a small amount of sexual content but it's certainly not for children.) Like much Japanese animation, *Eden* animates what we'd normally think of as live-action material, in this case a romantic-comedy-action-thriller.

It begins on a good-naturedly absurdist note – outside the White House a young woman encounters a handsome man who has neither memories nor clothes. There are shades of David Fincher's *The Game* (1997) as the man learns that he's in a life-or-death contest to change Japan's destiny. Luckily he has an unseen helper on a mobile phone, who can seemingly grant any wish. *Doctor Who*-style daffiness and James Bondish operatics sit comfortably with a dissident ethos out of J.D. Salinger, in which geeks



Colditz The television version expands on Major Pat Reid's personal story to provide a wartime history of the POW castle, and proves highly persuasive

and NEETs may be Japan's salvation or downfall. Writer-director Kamiyama Kenji previously made a lavish TV version of the cyberpunk franchise *Ghost in the Shell* (called *Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex*, available on British DVD). Thematic overlaps and subtle references suggest that *Eden* is actually *Ghost*'s prequel, but the new show has far more warmth and humour.

There are only two drawbacks for anime newcomers: the exciting climax leaves many threads untied (setting up two forthcoming feature films); and the design mixes hyperreal scenery with some disconcertingly cute characters (drawn by female manga artist Umino Chica) who sometimes look half the age they're supposed to.

Discs: As usual with anime DVDs, the disc includes both Japanese and dubbed soundtracks. The extras include a 20-minute conversation between Kamiyama and a coyly offscreen Umino. (AO)

Leverage – Series 1

Johnworld Inc./Electric Entertainment/TNT; US 2008-09; Icon Home Entertainment/Region 2; Certificate 12; 605 minutes; Aspect Ratio 16:9; Features: audio commentaries, deleted scenes, featurettes, making-of

Programme: Gina Bellman plays the world's worst stage actress and a first-class con artist in this fast-moving and highly engaging *divertissement*, which seems to have been closely modelled on the UK series *Hustle* and then crossbred with *Mission: Impossible* and *The A-Team* with a good deal of Yankee

ingenuity. Her main objective, along with fleeing vile corporate predators of their ill-gotten gains and returning the bounty to their innocent victims, is the rehabilitation of the ever nimble Timothy Hutton, an ex-insurance investigator who has turned against his callous employers – and to drink – after they refused to pay for treatment that could have saved his son's life. He puts together a disparate team of grifters who, after a heist in the opening story which nets them in excess of \$30 million a piece, choose to stay with him and ply their trade while also meting out a measure of justice.

An eager-to-please comedy-drama with a well-developed sense of how the heist genre works best – no guns, no violence, narrative stealth and speed in all things – it also has a nice line in throwaway pop-culture references, ranging from *Doctor Who* to such masters of the literary caper as Elmore Leonard and Donald Westlake. Papering over implausible plots with charm and tongue-in-cheek dialogue (one stratagem deploys a "stigmata paintball gun"), it also has a real knack for getting in and out of scenes with grace and considerable humour, which compensates for recurring dollops of sentimentality.

The introduction of the superb Mark Sheppard as Hutton's nemesis midway through the series provides a welcome jolt to keep viewers on their toes, leading to a well-executed succession of double and triple bluffs in the two-part season finale.

Discs: Shot on digital, the series looks spick and span on DVD, with an

explosive 5.1 sound mix. Each episode comes with its own audio commentary while the cluster of otherwise ho-hum featurettes includes an amusing end-of-season snippet in which the cast are informed that the show has been renewed for another year. (SA)

Space 1999 – Series 1

Group 3/RAI/ITC/ITV; UK 1975-76; Network DVD/Blu-ray Region B; Certificate PG; 1,450 minutes; Aspect Ratio 4:3; Features: audio and text commentaries, isolated music tracks, interviews, retrospective documentaries, 'Clapperboard' episodes, featurettes, stills galleries, interviews, Season 2 episode, trailers, booklet

Programme: With its too-similar title, uncluttered monochromatic designs, portentous use of classical music and overall mood of sombre detachment, this fascinating slice of sci-fi is almost overwhelmed by the influence of Stanley Kubrick's 2001: *A Space Odyssey*. The wholehearted submission to narrative experimentation, bordering on incoherence at times, pays surprising dividends, however. Gerry Anderson originally envisioned *Space 1999* as a sequel to his glum, highly peculiar alien invasion drama *UFO*, but eventually plumped for a template closer to that of *Star Trek* as Moonbase Alpha travels through the cosmos.

Many of the episodes authored by Christopher Penfold and Johnny Byrne, the series' principal writers, explore existential themes that certainly elevate the show's intellectual aspirations, even if they are occasionally let down by crass execution. In addition, the production values are incredibly plush, featuring enormous sets sumptuously shot on 35mm, well-behaved supporting artists (including Christopher Lee, Joan Collins and Peter Cushing) and – Anderson's forte – truly impressive model effects and pyrotechnics. The wide variety of pleasures on offer, aligned with the show's thematic richness and ambition, more than compensate for manifest scientific implausibility, cringe-making 1970s fashions, wooden above-the-title actors and laughable zero-gravity acting.

Discs: This Blu-ray release offers stunning high-definition images and robust sound quality. The impressive range of extras includes a second-season episode (also in HD), several retrospective featurettes and hours of interviews, including a fascinating if fairly caustic conversation with Sylvia Anderson. (SA)

This month's DVD releases reviewed by Sergio Angelini, Michael Atkinson, Michael Brooke, Tom Charity, Andrew Osmond, Kate Stables and David Thompson

Reviews in *Monthly Film Bulletin* and *Sight & Sound* are cited in parentheses

Read



Named and Shamed

Compiled by Christopher Tookey, Matador, 335pp, paperback, £9.95, ISBN 9781848765603

Daily Mail film critic Christopher Tookey has spent 25 years compiling this collection of movie reviews, which includes some of the funniest, best and most astute criticism ever published. Tookey and a host of critics, from the celebrated to the obscure, provide feedback on some of the biggest films to have reached our screens, indexed by actor or actress and presented alphabetically. Many of the most famous people of the last 100 years are here – from Woody Allen to Andrew Lloyd Webber. No celebrity is left unscathed in these short one-liner comments and paragraph reviews. www.troubador.co.uk



Shadows of Progress: Documentary Film in Post-War Britain

Edited by Patrick Russell and James Piers Taylor, BFI/Palgrave Macmillan, 448pp, paperback, £19.99, ISBN 9781844573219

The received wisdom is that British documentary went into decline after the war, resurrected only by Free Cinema and the arrival of TV documentary. *Shadows of Progress* demolishes these assumptions, presenting instead a complex picture of the sponsored documentary in flux. The book explores the reasons for the period's critical neglect, and addresses the production, distribution and key themes of British documentary. It also provides career biographies of key filmmakers of the period, from Lindsay Anderson to neglected figures such as John Krish, Sarah Erulkar and Eric Marquis. www.palgrave.com/bfi



Edith Head: The Fifty-Year Career of Hollywood's Greatest Costume Designer

By Jay Jorgensen, Running Press, 400pp, hardback, illustrated, £45, ISBN 9780762438051

With over 400 films to her credit, Edith Head ruled the costume-design departments at Paramount and Universal Studios for nearly six decades, garnering 35 Oscar nominations and winning eight – the most won by any woman to date. This spectacular one-of-a-kind book surveys Head's work in words and pictures, bringing together rare, never-before-seen sketches, fabric samples, costume tests and behind-the-scenes photos from the Edith Head archives. www.perseusbooksgroup.com



100 Animated Feature Films

By Andrew Osmond, BFI/Palgrave Macmillan, 252pp, hardback, £20, ISBN 9781844573400

Twenty years ago, animated features were widely perceived as cartoons for children. Today, though, they encompass an astonishing range of films, styles and techniques. There is the powerful adult drama of *Waltz with Bashir*; the Gallic sophistication of *Belleville Rendez-Vous*; the eye-popping violence of Japan's *Akira*; and the stop-motion whimsy of *Wallace & Gromit in The Curse of the Were-Rabbit*. Andrew Osmond provides an entertaining and illuminating guide to the endlessly diverse field of animated features, with entries on 100 of the most interesting and important animated films from around the world, from the 1920s to the present day. www.palgrave.com/bfi

Kings of comedy

Tom Charity *applauds a biographical survey of the big names in US film comedy*

Another Fine Mess: A History of American Film Comedy

By Saul Austerlitz, Chicago Review Press, 528pp, £15.73, ISBN 9781556529511

Writing about comedy can feel as rewarding as dancing about architecture – theoretically possible, but unlikely to keep you warm at night. Still, if comedy can be counted a movie genre, it would certainly be the most robust, the only one that has never gone out of style – the trouble being that it's a formula with such elastic conventions it defies that kind of overarching analysis.

Slapstick, screwball, vaudeville, romcom, spoof, mock-doc... Contemplating this unruly bag of frogs, Saul Austerlitz has taken a more straightforward approach to the history of the form. His book is organised as a loosely chronological survey dedicating a biographical essay to some 30 of the kings (and queens) of comedy, beginning with Chaplin and concluding, 380 pages later, with Judd Apatow. (An epilogue consists of nearly 100 quick sketches of the also-rans, everyone from Abbott and Costello to the Zucker brothers.)

It's a strategy that irons out complication, to be sure, but on the whole the 'great men of history' approach applies quite well here. As Austerlitz suggests in his introduction, "The American comedy film has been an exclusive club whose members have engaged in a rollicking ongoing debate over what constitutes a good laugh." Lubitsch inspires Wilder, the Coens channel Sturges, Chaplin influences almost everyone. Austerlitz invites us to draw up a chair and join in the conversation.

In this canon, actors outnumber directors by a wide margin – except that many of the stars also had the clout and the inclination to direct their own pictures. The only directors in the top 30 list who didn't also appear in front of the camera are Lubitsch, Wilder, Sturges, Altman, Apatow and the Coens. If there's a glaring omission, his name is Howard Hawks – but then he's roundly represented in the chapters on Cary Grant, Katharine Hepburn and Marilyn Monroe. Of course the screenwriters get the fuzzy end of the lollipop, but that's no more breaking news than the preponderance of Jewish men.

Only four women make the cut, none more recent than Doris Day. That's a brutal statistic, but from the modern era, who stakes a claim: Diane Keaton, Goldie Hawn, Whoopi Goldberg, Julia Roberts, maybe? Elaine May, if she had enjoyed more success. Lucille Ball probably has the strongest case, but TV is beyond this



This sporting life: Bill Murray in 'Caddyshack'; above, and Charlie Chaplin in 'City Lights'; below

It's rare to find a commentator who can point out the distinction between Murray in 'Meatballs' and in 'Caddyshack'



book's parameters. (There's no mention of 'Jackass', nor such influential British TV shows as 'Monty Python' and 'The Office'.) There could be a woman President before there's another female comic star as powerful as Mae West.

The essays themselves are engagingly written, lightly biographical and reliably perceptive. Austerlitz has done the legwork, and if he doesn't much care for Buster Keaton's 'Go West' (1925), he's not afraid to say so ("shapeless and unfocused" is his verdict). The scholarship is sound (in one aside he mistakes 'The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp' for 'A Matter of Life and Death', but that's the only howler I spotted). If the book occasionally gets bogged down in trying to keep pace with a busy star's more forgettable efforts, its pleasure lies in the palpable enjoyment Austerlitz takes in the best of them, whether it's 'City Lights', 'The Shop Around the Corner', 'Old School' or 'Meet the Parents'.

He's particularly good on the craft of comic performance: the differences between Bill Murray in 'Ghostbusters' (1984) and Murray in 'Lost in Translation' (2003) are obvious and well rehearsed, but it's rare to find a commentator who can point out with the same precision

the distinction between Murray in 'Meatballs' (1979) and in 'Caddyshack' (1980). Austerlitz is equally attentive to the good and not-so-great in Steve Martin and Ben Stiller's busy filmographies. Best of all, however, is the chapter on Richard Pryor. The movie roles never tapped the brilliance of the stand-up captured in his concert films, but even so Pryor was able to derail the so-so comedy thriller 'Silver Streak' (1976) and transform it into a stinging rebuke of the racial stereotyping that had gone before.

Pryor's glory days were shorter than most, but it's noticeable how many of the careers here peak and peter out within a furious ten to 15-year lifespan, as if recognition and acceptance could be comedy's ruin. Or maybe the recognition was never enough – to this day, only a handful of comedies have been nominated for the Academy Awards.

The life cycle of a genuinely funny comedian may be short, but Austerlitz reminds us that each generation replenishes the pool. For every clown who sets his cap at Hamlet (or in Murray's case, Polonius), there are innumerable young pretenders waiting in the wings who can think of nothing better than to play the fool and plunge us into another fine mess.

Alejandro González Iñárritu

By Celestino Deleyto and María del Mar Azcona, University of Illinois Press, 153pp, £13.99, ISBN 9780252077616

There has been no shortage of critical work on Alejandro González Iñárritu's first three films. In particular Paul Julian Smith's lucid BFI Modern Classics monograph on *Amores perros* and a recent co-edited volume by Frederic Miller, Agnes Vandome and John McBrewster demonstrate the fascination this Mexican-cum-transnational director exerts over the contemporary cinematic imagination. Celestino Deleyto and María del Mar Azcona's insightful and well-illustrated study is a welcome addition to the field, tendering incisive analysis alongside valuable contextualisation signalling the ways in which the filmmaker picks up and develops techniques visible in the work of directors as diverse as Griffith and Kurosawa.

Indeed the framing of his work within broader currents in Mexican cinema is one of the book's strengths. Instead of opting for a chronological approach, the authors offer a series of thematic sections: key essays examine the scrambled narratives in each of his filmic collaborations with screenwriter Guillermo Arriaga and the modes in which space is denoted through visual vocabularies. The emotional logic of *21 Grams* (2003), for instance, is analysed through the chronological jumps that illustrate the ways in which



Construction of space: González Iñárritu, right, directs Sean Penn in '21 Grams'

the construction of space works to pinpoint the fleeting moments of happiness experienced by the characters in the interstices of time in the film. The car crash – a familiar trope in the multi-protagonist film – comes in for particularly close analysis: *Amores perros* (2000) allows for the full visual impact of the crash to pervade the film from the outset; in *21 Grams* the decision not to show the fatal collision leaves the accident hovering over the events that follow like a bad smell. The parallels with *Babel* (2006) – again stories linked by a tragic accident – are teased out, with all three films shown to be fracturing linear time, albeit in differing ways.

Although some dissenting views are featured in the book, there is an evident (and at times perhaps overly enthusiastic) admiration for González Iñárritu's work. The filmmaker is constructed as a humanist, employing interlinked macronarratives and multi-protagonist structures as a way of reinforcing the shared emotional territories that bind human beings across class and continents. The 'look' of the films comes in for particularly interesting scrutiny. The prolific use of the wide-angle lens in *Amores perros*; the extreme close-ups, bleached colours and use of different filmstocks for the three main characters of *21 Grams*; the deployment of different shades of red

to demarcate borders in *Babel* – all are teased out in relation to the dominant motifs of the films. Space in *Babel* is often shown to take centre stage, displacing the protagonists to assume its own prominence within the intersecting narratives; indeed geographical and emotional borders represent a productive trope in the authors' examination of this film.

Gustavo Santaolalla's musical scores, which work as a bridge between different storylines in the three films, are mentioned briefly in a discussion on *Babel*, but his contribution is also covered in a revelatory interview with González Iñárritu that makes up the final section of the book. The discussion is far-ranging – from Latin American fiction to the processes of shaping a storyline in the editing room; from the politics of living in Los Angeles to the Mexican films the director admires.

The interview offers particular insight into the challenges involved in making his most recent film *Biutiful*. While he presents his fourth feature as a shift of direction, the dilemmas and dramas of Javier Bardem's protagonist Uxbal don't seem a million miles away from those of Sean Penn's Paul and Benicio del Toro's Jack in *21 Grams*. Persuasively argued and refreshingly jargon-free, this is a book that gets you thinking through González Iñárritu's temporal games without turning the analysis into a formalistic, clinical exercise. ♦♦ **María Delgado**

Danny Boyle: In His Own Words

By Amy Raphael, Faber and Faber, 384pp, £14.99, ISBN 9780571253869

By their very format, Faber and Faber's book-length director interviews promote the director as the creative nexus of the filmmaking process, and directorial style as a self-evident and definable quantity. Yet these are assumptions easily questioned in the case of a figure such as Danny Boyle, who has worked across multiple genres and collaborated with writers and producers who can lay convincing claim to their own auteur status. Unlike certain other subjects of the Faber series – David Lynch, David Cronenberg, Krzysztof Kieslowski, Terry Gilliam – Boyle has never been regarded as a chin-stroking visionary with a back catalogue firmly stamped with unmistakable idiosyncrasies. With nine feature-film credits as director, his is also a relatively spare CV – albeit one studded with titles whose timeliness, daring or sheer unshiftable influence have secured them uncommon pop-culture longevity.

A worthy subject, then? Boyle himself apparently had to be persuaded; on her initial approach, Amy Raphael reports, "He doesn't know why anyone might be interested in a book about him." Even once on board, he regularly notes his discomfort with deification.

In the event, however, it's Boyle's very absence of grandiosity that lends this volume its expansiveness and vigour, and ensures its value to fans, aspiring filmmakers and scholars of the vagaries of British film history.

If not wholly comfortable probing the origins of his own creativity or the sources of his ideas, Boyle proves a generous and informative guide to the nitty-gritty of filmmaking: the networks of relationships, both carefully nurtured and happenstance, that contribute to each film's genesis; the fits and starts that afflict casting, funding and shooting; the blessings and catastrophes that defy all prediction. Boyle diligently offers credit to the behind-the-scenes practitioners he calls "mini-directors" – first ADs, cameramen, production designers – thus not only proving himself an endearingly steadfast enthusiast for the contributions of others, but also throwing welcome light on the nature of what they do on set.

Positivity abounds; in fact the whole book rather contradicts critic Manohla Dargis' quoted observation that "Mr Boyle is the sort of creative

type in whom the milk of human kindness often seems to curdle rather than flow." Not only is Boyle a lover of happy endings – who insisted on an anti-nihilistic twist in *Trainspotting* (1995) and junked an alternative *28 Days Later* (2002) ending in which Cillian Murphy's protagonist died – but he froths with admiration for the kitsch blockbusters of James Cameron and the precision romcoms of Richard Curtis.

He may have given the world gore, gross-out and glassings galore, but Boyle does come across as tremendously nice.

Still, he's also disarmingly willing to detail how things can turn ugly. His famously close collaboration

with screenwriter John Hodge and producer Andrew Macdonald – designed, he says, on the "rock band role model" of shared creative responsibility – emerges as a union driven in no small part by friction. More intriguing still is Boyle's symbiotic relationship with *Shallow Grave* (1994) and *Trainspotting* star Ewan McGregor, which fractured when Boyle gave Leonardo DiCaprio the lead in *The Beach* (2000), and is described here in terms almost befitting a broken romance. Also frankly dissected are the films and elements of films that didn't work – whether in Boyle's opinion, in Raphael's, or in that of the paying public. Critics come into it, but in them Boyle takes less of an interest – his is a sincere and avid populism, and he is not only prepared but actively keen to alter his films according to focus-group feedback.

Raphael is prone to the odd bout of fangirl gush, with questions such as: "Did you realise you were about to rejuvenate British cinema with your feature film debut?" On the whole, however, she's an informed and thoughtful interviewer, blessed with a subject who – whatever your take on his films – occupies a fascinating position, as a commercially viable British filmmaker with no politicised social-realist baggage to declare. ♦♦ **Hannah McGill**

Leader of the band:
Danny Boyle



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Two thumbs down

I was surprised by the sign-off line in Henry K. Miller's review of David Fincher's latest film (*S&S*, November). "The Social Network is a classic," wrote Miller, "and I can't wait to see it again." While I share the writer's enthusiasm for the picture, and his impatience for a repeat viewing, *S&S* shouldn't have any truck with unhelpful, meaningless terms such as "a classic", unless it is to chastise the sort of critics who trade in them. Of course, it's all about context – such a phrase would not be out of place in *Empire* magazine, or in the *News of the World*. But that's precisely why *S&S* must be vigilant about where it draws its line in the semantic sand. It isn't so very far from "The Social Network is a classic" to "Five stars!", "Two thumbs up!" and "If you see only one film this year..."

Ryan Gilbey
London

Romeo, Romeo

Like David Thompson (*Books*, *S&S*, December), I too underwent a screening of Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* surrounded by a clutch of culturally force-fed schoolgirls. They too were overcome by sobbing and sighing, but not brought on by an appreciation of Nino Rota's music. Rather, I suspect it was occasioned by pubescent approval of Leonard Whiting! My daughter, who experienced the film on a similar trip in the 1990s, bears me out in this!

Les Hooper
Glasgow

It's a wonderful deal

Readers who enjoyed Joseph McBride's Frank Capra piece ("Capra Before He Became 'Capraesque'", *S&S*, December) may be interested to know that two of the films he enthuses about, *The Miracle Woman* and *The Bitter Tea of General Yen*, are currently available as part of a six-DVD Region 2 box-set from UCA called simply (and not very helpfully) *Barbara*

Bargain Barbara:
Stanwyck
on DVD



LETTER OF THE MONTH

Broadband speed

I really enjoyed Kent Jones's feature on *The Social Network* ("Only Connect", *S&S*, November). Mulling over the movie on the bus ride home after seeing it, I remembered a line from *The Magnificent Ambersons*, which I immediately looked up on my phone. It goes: (in those days) "the only public conveyance was the streetcar. A lady could whistle to it from an upstairs window and the car would halt at once and wait for her while she shut the window, put on her hat and coat, went downstairs, found an umbrella, told the 'girl' what to have for dinner and came forth from the house. Too slow for us nowadays, because the faster we're carried, the less time we have to spare." What Welles observed in 1942 – by way of Booth Tarkington, who wrote the novel in 1918 – has now extended from the transport of people to the transport of language.

The opening of *The Social Network* is on one level a scene of a very bad date, but on the other level it's a conversation between the traditional analogue pace of dialogue versus the breathless broadband chatter of the digital age. Mark Zuckerberg (played by Jesse Eisenberg, right) is a DSL in flip-flops. His girlfriend Erica even exclaims after the intense, rapid-fire discourse across a bar table: "Dating you is like dating a stamaster!" That scene totally defined Zuckerberg's character for the rest of the film. I don't think Zuckerber



is an "asshole" or even trying to be. It's just that he's running on such a blistering trajectory that it robs him of reflection – a moment to weigh his words, to consider the repercussions of his actions on others – because to do so would require him to slow down, an act that you can see he's incapable of from

his fidgety contempt during his court hearings. What mattered to him was being ahead of the race, and that's a lonely place to be – unless you're a Winklevoss, because then you always have your twin brother to gloat with.

Ramsey Hassan
By email

Stanwyck. At time of writing (mid November) it's available via Amazon Marketplace for under a fiver – and the other films featured include *Double Indemnity* and *The Lady Eve*!
Louise Mulholland
By email

We are the robots

I enjoyed Kim Newman's piece about *Metropolis* ("Remake Remodel", *S&S*, October). But while he's right about its influence on various directors, surely the film's most profound influence on popular culture has come via music – something your excellent LP-like cover design and Roxy Music-inspired headline both brought instantly to mind. You could make a case for Kraftwerk's 1978 album *The Man-Machine* as the single biggest influence on the electronic route taken by pop music over the subsequent three decades. Overly inspired by Lang's film – Kraftwerk once famously referred to themselves as "the children of Fritz Lang and Wernher von Braun" – it includes not just the title track but also "We Are the Robots" and, of course, "Metropolis". Meanwhile their fellow electronic-music pioneer Giorgio Moroder went one step further, re-editing the film to a dodgy disco score in 1984, though by then his days as a cutting-edge

producer were far behind him. Now a Kraftwerk score for the restored *Metropolis* – that'd really be something!
Tina Engstrom
By email

Memories of 'Tom'

Congrats on an excellent December issue of the indispensable *S&S*, an invigorating mix of the old and the new. Having been 21 at the time, and living in London, I was particularly interested by the piece on *Peeping Tom*. I saw the film the day it opened and was bowled over by it – but the reviews really were devastating. I didn't read *Tribune* at the time, but Derek Hill's withering comments quickly became famous. It's interesting, given his apparent call for the film to be destroyed and flushed away, that Derek (who became a good friend; we had lunch in London in May) was later an anti-censorship campaigner who pioneered the concept of cinema clubs in order to screen uncut problematic films by directors like Makavejev and Oshima. Interesting too how Alex Walker famously waxed and waned in support or otherwise of violent films. I was in Locarno when *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (the original) screened there after being banned in Britain, and Alex took up the

cudgels to get the ban overturned; many years later he took entirely the opposite tack over *Fight Club* when it screened in Venice, getting on the phone to whoever was the chief censor then and telling him it ought not to be allowed!

There was very much a sense that both Powell and Hitchcock – two highly regarded, even revered British directors (by the critical establishment of the time) – had somehow crossed a line with *Peeping Tom* and *Psycho* which, as your article says, opened within a few weeks of each other. Hitchcock's skills as a self-publicist were never seen to greater advantage than with *Psycho*: no stills made available, enigmatic posters, that amazing trailer – and a campaign demanding that "no-one is allowed to enter the cinema after the film has begun" (in the days of continuous performances when people drifted in and out). I saw the Powell film with a minuscule audience, and queued around the block to get into *Psycho*, which – not knowing anything about it beforehand – was an experience I'll never forget.

David Stratton
By email

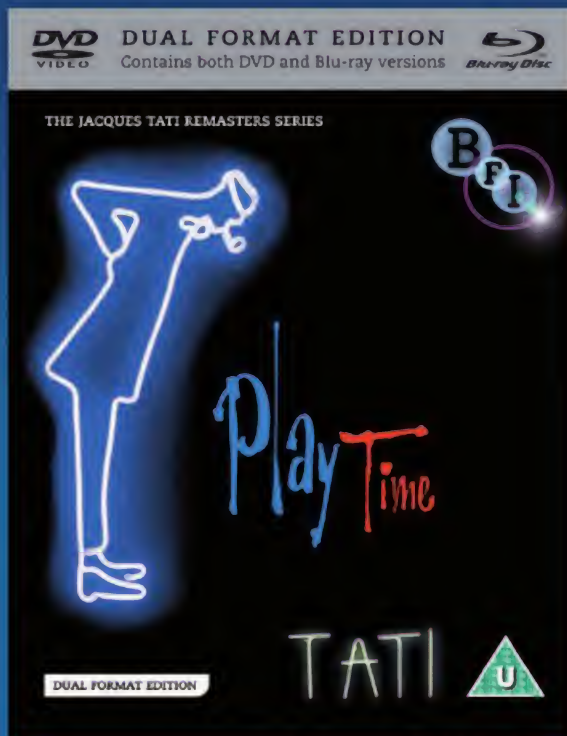
Additions & corrections

December p.67 *Leap Year* Cert 18, 92m 13s 8,300 ft +3 frames; p.72 *An Ordinary Execution*, Cert 12A, 105m 8s, 9,462 ft +0 frames

READER OFFERS see page 22 for details

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